



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

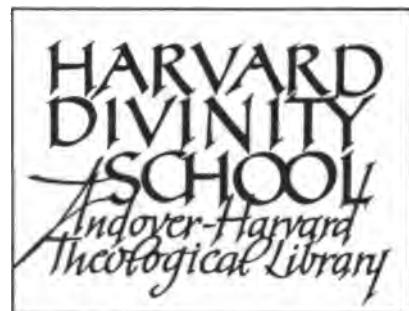
We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>









14317

63

REV. DR. MAGIE'S SERMON

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

1847.



OUR TRUE ENCOURAGEMENT.



A

(1)

673

S E R M O N ,

PREACHED AT BUFFALO, NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 8, 1847,

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR

FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AT THEIR

THIRTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL MEETING.

BY REV. DAVID MAGIE, D. D.,

ELIZABETHTOWN, N. J.

BOSTON :

PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN, 24 CONGRESS STREET.

1847.

S.C.R.
BV
2075
A643

S E R M O N.

ISAIAH, XXXII. 15.

UNTIL THE SPIRIT BE POURED UPON US FROM ON HIGH.

As regards the final and universal triumphs of the gospel, no believer in the Bible can entertain a doubt. Glorious things are spoken of Zion, the city of our God, and we are assured, explicitly, that the kingdoms of this world shall one day become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ. That light which now shines on our path, is yet to lighten all the Gentiles, and be the glory of the people of Israel.

Thus it is written, and thus it will be. But what is to secure the ultimate coming of this happy period? Our hope all hangs on one single thing—the promise of the Spirit—and occupying the position we do in the annals of time, we can look neither backward nor forward, without being convinced how dependent we are on such aid. What has been done, teaches us this; and what is still to be done teaches it with even greater emphasis. Every past conquest has been the effect of union and communion with the divine Comforter; and our ability to

carry on the enterprise in a way at all commensurate with the grandeur of the object before us, must be derived from the same source. Even more than former assistance will be needed. Instead of occasional drops of mercy, water must be poured upon the thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.

The text refers to this; and it is too well understood to require any particular explanation. Suffice it simply to say, that the chapter begins with a cheering account of the approach of a brighter day; but it goes on to tell us that, in the meantime, a season of gloom and depression would ensue, to be terminated only by the pouring out of the Spirit from on high. This would work a delightful change. Then the wilderness would become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.

No language could be more appropriate to us, in the relation which we, as a **Missionary Society**, sustain to the conversion of the world. Large as are our resources, numerous as are the laborers we have sent forth, and strong as is the hold which this blessed cause has taken on the affections of the people, we were never more dependent on help from heaven, than at this very moment. Without special divine aid we can do nothing. God must plentifully imbue our hearts with the influences of the Spirit, that we may use *the right means for effecting our object*, that we may *prosecute the work with proper energy*, and that we may see *our efforts attended with success*. These are the points which I wish to illustrate and enforce.

I. The Spirit of God must be with us, or we shall not use the right means for converting the world.

Our undertaking is a vast one, and we are not left in uncertainty as to the way in which it is to be accomplished. That gospel, which God has given us to spread, as well as to enjoy, was made for man; and though there is in it no independent efficacy, it does possess an adaptedness to the renovation of his moral nature. No matter where you meet him, or whatever be the depth of his depravity, this is the remedy for his ruin. There is here an ordained channel through which the Spirit of God operates to change the heart, make the poor pagan a new creature, turn the desert into a goodly land, and fill a world of crime and sorrow with righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Sending the knowledge of Christ abroad through the nations, is the appointed method of saving men. We know of no other means—having thus the seal of heaven upon them—for subverting the kingdom of Satan, rooting idolatry out of the earth, and restoring our race to fellowship with their Maker.

The commission under which we act runs thus—to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified. To bring about this result, we are confined to a single instrumentality—the pure, unadulterated gospel—that gospel which we ourselves have received, and wherein we stand. This we are

pledged, as far as in us lies, to send abroad to all them that dwell on the face of the earth, assured that nothing is wanting to cause the truth to triumph everywhere, but the accompanying power of the Holy Spirit. Our great business is to teach men that they have ruined themselves by sin, to lead them to disclaim all righteousness of their own, and to bring them to a cordial trust in the blood of the cross. We must give the heathen that very gospel which was preached on the day of Pentecost, which the Reformation carried into the heart of Germany, which was found in the caves and mountains of Scotland when she was faithful to her covenant, which our Puritan Fathers brought with them from the old world, and which glowed with divine life in the bosom of an Edwards, a Brainerd, and a Davies. This is the panoply in which we are to wage war with the powers of darkness. We have no other armor.

This gospel we are to send, in simplicity and godly sincerity, to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. It must be our determination, at every stage of progress, not to know anything save Jesus Christ, and him crucified; and so long as we pursue the work in this way, we may be cheered with the conviction that an instrumentality on which God has a thousand times made his impress, will not be employed in vain. This can save a soul from death, and it can save a world from death. If we ever forget that there is a principle of vitality in the genuine gospel—the plan of salva-

tion, the story of the crucifixion—when thus applied, we shall find the very sinews of missionary effort all cut at once. The words that I speak unto you, said the Great Teacher, they are spirit, and they are life. There shall be a handful of corn in the earth, upon the top of the mountains, the fruit whereof shall shake like Lebanon.

It is more faith in God's instrumentality that we need. We look at the gospel, and what is it, if left to itself, but the declaration of a fact—the narration of an event—the revelation of a doctrine? How can it change the heart of a heathen, and create new sensations, and lead to new solicitudes, and awaken new joys there, to tell him that in Christ we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace? The cause seems unequal to the effect. But when there goes, along with the statement of such facts, an unseen agency, more powerful than that which makes the mountains tremble, all difficulty is removed. The gospel is not the breath of man—it is the power of God. It is not a feeble weapon, it is the sword of the Spirit. It is not a mere tale of wonder, it is a message of life. Nothing that the world has ever seen descends so deeply into the seat of human sympathies, or works such revolutions in the character of man.

The kind of duty we have to perform is obvious. We but go forth, in the persons of our missionaries, to declare, in the school, along the way-side, and at the temple of idolatry, that which we ourselves have

seen, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life. There is no necessity for our being told, that this is God's method for working salvation in the midst of the earth. Never can it be matter of surprise to us, that the bare reading of the story of the crucifixion, in the lonely tent of a man of God in Greenland, should be attended with such power as to strike the mind of a half-sleeping heathen at the door, and prompt him to exclaim, "Those are precious words, let me hear them again." We must forget our own conversion, before these things can appear strange.

It is no part of our business to make experiments for the relief of human wo, or the removal of human guilt. We have a Saviour to speak of; whose blood we know cleanseth from all sin; we have the invitation to give: whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely; and then, to complete our resources, we have the promise, Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. This is our reliance. Thus equipped, we go out to fight God's battle among men. And sad will be the day when our compassion for sinners begins to dig for itself a channel different from that in which the Saviour's flowed, or our impatience to get the work done leads us to the use of means such as he has not authorized. All we can do—all we are allowed to do—is to take our stand at the foot of the cross, and point the heathen to its bleeding victim. Our sole expedient for saving men from hell, is the atonement of Calvary, the expiatory sacrifice of the Son of God; that

righteousness which is unto all, and upon all them that believe. These constitute the glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. When our sons and our daughters leave us to cross oceans, and climb mountains, and journey over valleys, we must charge them to repeat everywhere the story of the apostasy, and of the death of Christ to remove the curse. We must exhort them to say, God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life.

These are the means by which we are to accomplish our object, and we need to be kept to them without deviation or faltering. But this can be done only by such a measure of divine influence, daily exerted upon our hearts, as shall cause the gospel to loom up largely and gloriously before us, and inspire us with a perfect confidence in its divinely appointed efficacy. As a missionary organization, the presence with us of the Good Spirit, is indispensable. No resolutions, however stringent, to require an orthodox creed in those who enter the foreign field—no well adjusted frame work of ecclesiastical supervision—no votes of councils or synods to commission only good men and true, will secure the giving of real, vital Christianity to the nations. These things may be useful and important, but they are not sufficient. The moment we ourselves become indifferent to the doctrines of total depravity, justification by faith, and regeneration by the Spirit, the trumpet we blow on the other side of the

globe, will give an uncertain sound. We shall plant no better religion than we possess.

There is a downward tendency in man—in the best of men—and in the best of men engaged in the holiest work,—which nothing can effectually counteract, but a constantly exerted divine influence. Charters, subscriptions, pledges, will not do it. These, when the heart gets wrong, are weak as a thread of tow. God, the Holy Ghost, must be with us at every step, or we shall even lose those things which we have already wrought, and never receive a full reward.

Let me add : this view of the gospel, as the wisdom of God, and the power of God, will impart such an aspect of simplicity to our aims, and give such a type of homogeneousness to our efforts, as will help us to move forward with harmony in our great work. We shall not then lay out our strength on extraneous matters, or matters which, though valuable in themselves, do not properly belong to us as a missionary society. Our object, be it never forgotten, is not to make any direct attack upon forms of civil government, however cruel and despotic, or to carry a crusade into the arrangements of social life, however inconsistent they may seem with the highest degree of human happiness. These may be great evils here, and they may lie very much in our way, but the first assault is not to be made on these out-works. If we feel as Paul felt, or as Martyn felt, or as Christ felt, our chief desire will be to secure, for the real

gospel, a lodgment in the heart, assured that this is the divine method of reforming the life. We need not fear. Truth is like chain-shot—give one link its direction, and it will draw after it the entire charge. Make the heathen Christians, and they will not fail to become men.

Such is our work, and such are the appliances with which we are furnished for carrying it on. The gospel, preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, is all we need to recover men from their sins, and make this world of ours vocal with the high praises of God. This comprises the length and breadth of our duty. Our service is performed when, in reliance on divine aid, we have testified in the face of all nations repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. But,

II. Unless the Holy Spirit be with us, *we shall never prosecute our work with proper energy.*

No missionary enterprise can be expected to flourish, which does not take fast hold on the hearts, and deeply move the sympathies of its friends. This is a cause of too much import to be carried on lukewarmly. Some years ago, a number of young men, candidates for service in foreign lands, in the papal church, pledged themselves to God and to each other to be faithful, by each opening a vein in his arm and writing his name in his own blood. I plead not for this. It may have been superstition. But if covenanting in blood can bind man to his duty, then we are bound with ligatures which can never be broken.

It is easy to see that one of the main purposes of the Church on earth, is her own self-extension. We learn, on every page of the history of the early propagation of the gospel, that the apostles did not ordain elders in every city, chiefly, much less exclusively, to keep ground already gained, or to rejoice in conquests already made. With them the field was the world. Their plan was an out-going, an aggressive one. But this is a kind of work which we shall never follow up with a full heart, except as our desire to spread the gospel, as well as our individual appreciation of it, is quickened by the Spirit of God. Neither of these things is natural to us, and unless supplied, as was the oil in the prophet's vision, they will grow weak and vanish away. We know, by sad experience, that our persuasion of a personal welcome to trust in Christ, becomes indistinct, whenever we are left to ourselves; and we also know that when thus left, we forget the claims of a dying world.

The church, every one admits, ought to place the sending of the gospel to the heathen among the most solemn and clearly ascertained of all her duties. It belongs to her to see that her members are kept apprised of the aspects and wants of this vast undertaking, cheerfully providing the means for every newly projected occupation of the enemy's country, and carefully watching over young Christians of promise, to mark the developments of their character, as to any special fitness for such service. These are points in relation to which there can be

no doubt. Who can hesitate to believe that the bringing forward of candidates for this high employment, should be an object of the deepest interest to every minister of the gospel, every professor of theology, and every ecclesiastical judicatory? Parents ought to prize such a post for a beloved son or daughter, above one in the retinue of an ambassador to the mightiest potentate on earth. Daily should prayer be made that the Holy Ghost would separate our Barnabases and our Sauls to the work of Christian Missions.

But how are we to get up to this state of feeling, and this standard of action? We shall but practice an imposition upon ourselves if we merely compare what is now doing with what was done a few years ago, instead of summoning courage to ask what the opening providences of God require at our hands, or what our own good hope through grace should prompt us to undertake. All seems bright and animated enough, when mingling in an immense congregation like this to exchange Christian salutations, and to sharpen each the countenance of his friend, by the rehearsal of some striking incident. We might almost suppose that the tribes of the Lord had assembled to decide which should have the honor of going up first to possess the land. There are ministers enough, and friends of the Redeemer enough to move the world. But let us beware how we take this as the actual guage of missionary zeal among us. We can attend anniversaries, and make speeches, and indulge in the

luxury of pleasant feeling, better than we can go into our closets and pray, "Thy kingdom come," and better than we can write, "Holiness to the Lord," on all our possessions and enjoyments. Alas ! we have very little of the mind that was in him who cried out in relation to this work, "How am I straitened till it be accomplished!" Never shall we act with energy until we have more of the Spirit of God.

This is no time for self-felicitation. If we are in advance of some by-gone ages, we fall most reproachfully behind the feeling and effort of primitive times. The records of the struggles of the early disciples of the Saviour with the paganism of the world, brief as these records are, furnish proof of the most conclusive kind, against us. How they toiled and suffered, we well know, for the statement is, that to their power, yea, and beyond their power, they gave of their substance, praying the Apostles with much entreaty, to take upon them the ministering to the Saints. No wonder that the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed. Calamitous as the times were, we find the religion of the crucified one triumphing, in a few centuries, over ten violent persecutions, and then, instead of being shorn of her strength, putting on the purple, and sitting down on the throne of the Cæsars.

But now, alas, half our strength has to be expended in trying to keep our enterprise up to lines already reached. Instead of onward move-

ments, enlarging year by year, to correspond with the calls, which an open world, and fields every-where white to the harvest, are addressing to us, we seem, so far as men and money, and new stations are concerned, to be almost stationary; and this too, at a time when every branch of secular business is borne forward on such a tide of prosperity, as the land has never known before.

Why this falling off from the zeal and self-denial of the first disciples? Only give us the same implicit faith in the realities of the world to come, the same abiding conviction of the value of the soul, the same unshaken reliance on the blood of the cross, and above all, the same accompanying influence of the Spirit of God, and we can work as well as primitive believers. As for external means and resources, we are better off than they ever were. Not only have we wealth on our side, which they had not, and science, which they had not, and the countenance of civil governments, which they had not, but we have the Bible translated, and the means of translating it, into almost every language under heaven. We can do what they did—carry the gospel to every city—and then we can do what they did not, and could not do—leave copies of the word of God in every city.

So far as resources are concerned, and acquaintance with the condition of the world, and rapidity of communication with lands afar off, we have advantages over all the friends of the Redeemer, of past ages, inspired and uninspired. But in one

thing, many of them excelled us. They felt, as I fear we do not, their need of power from on high, and go where they might, they seem to have carried with them a never failing assurance that, when they planted and watered, God would give the increase. This was their grand distinction over modern times. It was not simply that they could speak with tongues, having never learned them—it was not that it was given them in the same hour what they should say—nor was it that they could confirm their testimony by signs and wonders following. These things did not change the hearts of honorable men and women not a few. It was not thus that a great company of the priests became obedient to the faith. There must be along with all this, and in addition to it all, the working of that same power, which wrought in Christ, when he was raised from the dead, to give the truth any saving effect. This they sought, and this they enjoyed. Oh, had we the same confidence in divine aid, we should go forward with energy, and a voice would soon be heard, saying to the North, give up; and to the South, keep not back. Bring thy sons from far, and thy daughters from the ends of the earth.

For my part I despair of ever seeing the church come up to any suitable standard of praying, and giving, and doing, until the Spirit is more copiously poured upon us from on high. Nothing else can reach the secret place of feeling in these cold bosoms of ours, or indite those effectual, fervent supplications which avail much, or open the purse of

this money-loving generation. We are shut up to this single resource. It only remains to say,

III. That the Spirit must be given us, or we shall never see *our efforts crowned with success*.

In no other way can one chase a thousand, or two put ten thousand to flight. There is something in a simple dependence on divine help, which will not fail to impart to our labors a character so earnest and decided as to betoken a favorable result; while, at the same time, it will be sure to invest them with a becoming air of sobriety and self-distrust. We always work best ourselves, when we feel that God is working in us both to will and to do. This is an infallible cure for despondency. How can difficulties, be they what they may, depress the man who really believes that the heart of the imperious Brahmin, the fiery Druze, or the degraded Zulu, is in the hand of the Lord, as the clay in the hand of the potter? This is encouragement enough. The floods may lift up—the floods may lift up their voice—yea, the floods may lift up their waves, but thou, O Lord, on high, art mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.

If we only use the right means, in the right way, failure is impossible. Long ago was the matter settled that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head; and how can we entertain a doubt, as we trace this promise on, and find it amplified and rendered more distinct by successive prophets of the Most High, until at length God is

manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory. It is no more an open question whether nations shall come bending to him, and kings bow down before him. This point is fixed, and all misgiving is sinful. Once it was sublimely said, Fear not, you carry Cæsar and his fortunes; but now it is said, in language of far higher and nobler sublimity, Fear not, for God is with you, and sooner or later your work shall be rewarded. Confidence in an invisible arm is, of itself, an element of prosperity. Read the history of men who have been strong, and done exploits in the world, and you will find that they were carried steadily forward by a confidence, which scarcely ever forsook them, in supernatural aid. It was so with that remorseless tyrant who styled himself the Scourge of God—it was so with Cortes, as he trampled unoffending nations under his bloody feet—it was so with Cromwell, when he bound kings with chains and princes with fetters of iron—it was so with Washington, as he lifted up his head serenely above the clouds and storms of the Revolution—it was so, in a better, higher, nobler sense, with Luther, and Whitfield, and Paul. Nothing so nerves the arm and strengthens the heart, as confidence in God. Who art thou, O great mountain! Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain.

This is a point which we ought to ponder again and again. I grant that the gospel which we are

laboring to send out over the world, is so little after man, as well in the doctrines it inculcates, as in the duties it enjoins, that we can have no hope of its ultimate and universal triumph, but in the belief of an accompanying divine operation. This is true everywhere. Even here, among ourselves, where a general Christian sentiment exists, where the laws and usages of society favor a profession of godliness, and where the labors of the preacher are enforced by living epistles for Christ, known and read of all men—we have nothing else to depend upon. What, then, shall we do without the Spirit of God in a work which carries us out far beyond the range of all evangelical influence? Those who go forth to convert men in lands where every train of thought, and every prejudice of education, and every habit of life, are cast in a pagan mould, must find themselves weak as babes, except as they are girded with strength from on high.

But here light breaks in upon us. No antecedent preparation is necessary to encourage our hopes, when we carry the gospel to the dark places of the earth. The footsteps of Revelation do not require to be preceded by the march of science, nor does the efficacy of the story of the Cross need to be prepared for by any previous culture of mind or manners. So far as respects such auxiliaries, the gospel is competent to go alone. We may safely give it as a first lesson. The simple recital of God's plan of saving men, attended by that almighty influence which we are fully justi-

fied in expecting, meets the savage and tames him, the barbarian and civilizes him, the Hottentot and elevates him, the Dyak and subdues him. An omnipotent energy goes along with the oft-repeated tale. We may liken it to the silent and noiseless influence of the sun, visiting us with his morning beams, and rejoicing as a strong man to run a race —or to the quiet and serene efficacy of the dew, as it descends with the shades of the evening, to spread fertility abroad over the earth. These energies are so mild in their movements, as not to awaken infancy in its cradle, ~~or distract old age on~~ its weary bed. But quiet and potent as are such operations of nature, they are only emblems of an equally quiet, though infinitely more potent operation of grace which, in the manifold wisdom of God, is made to attend the simple annunciation of the gospel.

We rest with confidence here. It is the purpose of the Father thus to give the Son a seed to serve him. On the strength of a prediction so encouraging, we may press forward, assured that God will take out of the nations a people for himself, and that in no tribe or city, where the gospel is faithfully preached, will there fail to be a remnant, according to the election of grace. What if our efforts are powerless in themselves? We have only, in obedience to the divine command, to fill the valley of Edom with ditches, and the water to supply them will, in due time, come, either from the clouds, or the bowels of the earth. Moses hesi-

tated about attempting to deliver his brethren. But he, at length, went on, and the Nile was turned into blood, and hail stones and coals of fire descended, and darkness covered the land—and the first born died—and Pharaoh let the people go. Nothing is too hard for the Lord.

Jesus is to see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied, and the Spirit, in the hearts of believers, is to secure to him this reward. We anticipate the time, when France, with her little remnant of true faith revived, shall build again her long since dilapidated Huguenot temples—when the active penetrating mind of Germany shall work out a second Reformation, more glorious than the first—and when all Europe shall inquire after the old paths, and recover the precious doctrine of justification by faith. India too, with her idolatrous sons, including the kingdoms which have gone after the false Prophet, with his crescent, his battle field, and his sensual Paradise—and China, at whose walls we were so long and so anxiously waiting, with all her uncounted millions shall welcome the gospel of the blessed God. Yes, and even Africa, poor Africa, steeped in crime and sorrow at home, and everywhere abroad goaded and peeled by the bloody whip of the task-master, shall come forward and lift up her head among the ransomed nations, and rejoice in the liberty wherewith Christ sets his people free. These lands are all to join our own, with her noble rivers, her extensive lakes, her beautiful prairies, and her lofty mountains, in placing the crown upon

the head of Immanuel. Blessed prospect! May God hasten it in his time!

Nay more—reality already begins to mingle with prediction, and accomplishment follows upon the heels of anticipation. When we reflect upon the steady and long continued blessings which have descended upon our labors at Ceylon—the wonders of mercy wrought in the Sandwich Islands—almost renewing the days of old—the solemn movement among the Armenians, bringing forth in such lovely forms all the fruits of the Spirit—and the convictions and conversions now occurring in the midst of the Nestorians, it seems to me, if we should altogether hold our peace, the very stones would cry out. With all that has thus been predicted, and all that has thus been achieved spread out together before our eyes, can it be deemed premature to say: O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain. O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid—say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God.

Such, fathers and brethren, are some of the views which it seemed to me important to present, on this occasion. Called to the discharge of a duty, which no one can expect to perform a second time, it has been my heart's desire and prayer to God, to be led to suggest such trains of thought, as might benefit myself and my fellow laborers in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. This object I have sought to gain, by fixing our minds on the Holy Spirit of

promise, as our good hope in seeking to convert the world.

Now, as we sit here, and contemplate all this, what is the first feeling that springs up in every pious bosom? I speak for you, disciples of the Saviour! It is one of gratitude to God—gratitude that we ourselves have heard the joyful sound, and been brought to bow to the sceptre of King Jesus; gratitude that to us is given the privilege of being almoners of salvation to a lost world—a privilege which Gabriel before the throne might covet—and gratitude that we have the pledge of an influence to accompany our efforts, which shall eventually cause the truth everywhere to triumph. It is for this, among other reasons, that we are kept a little while out of heaven. Christ will have us suffer with him, and labor with him, that we may, at length, be more fully glorified together. Our business then is, not to sit down content with the fact that we have been begotten again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; or to rejoice in trophies already won; or successes already gained among the heathen, but to gird up our loins anew for a further onset upon the kingdom of darkness.

For this we have special encouragement in the times in which our lot is cast. Never is it to be forgotten, that we are not only living under what the apostle calls the ministration of the Spirit, but we are now approaching that period of it, when developments of mercy are to be expected, more numerous and striking than have distinguished any

past age. The great promise of the Old Testament was fulfilled eighteen hundred years ago. Then it was that wisdom built her house, and hewed out her pillars, and killed her beasts, and mingled her wine, and furnished her table, and ever since she has been sending out her maidens, and crying in the high places of the cities. But we want one blessing more; the promise of the New Testament, the pouring out of the Spirit. An atonement has been made, commensurate with the exigencies of the world, and all that we can need additional is, the coming of that blessed Comforter, whose presence in the church is more than a compensation for the departure of the Saviour. This is the gift in which are wrapped up the destinies of the race.

Nothing else can keep alive the missionary zeal of the church. It will not do to rely upon such highly wrought descriptions of the sorrows of those who hasten after another god, as the talents and eloquence of the friends of this good cause may now and then give. Emotion may, in this way, be excited in our breasts, and tears drawn from our eyes. But we cannot calculate upon feeling thus awakened; the fountain is not full enough. The impression is not abiding enough. Besides, the oft-repeated looking upon the miseries of heathenism, apart from all divine influence, like familiarity with any other miseries, must tend to harden rather than soften the heart. We need to be impelled by a higher motive. To hold out in such a work as this, we must have the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

Hence, too, arises all our encouragement. Faith in the efficacy of the gospel, when preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, is the mainspring of every effort to save the heathen. Man's utter ruin is a fact, written so clearly upon every page of the Bible, and portrayed so vividly in the whole history of the race, that it cannot be gainsayed. That the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin is also a fact, which no believer in revelation can hesitate for a moment to admit. Now, all that is necessary is for the remedy to be applied to the disease, and that is done, done effectually and gloriously, when the Spirit takes of the things of Christ, and shows them unto men. This is the agency, which can render our dead and dark world instinct with the presence, and radiant with the beauties of holiness.

But alas, we have very little of the special presence of the blessed Spirit. The discouragements, which press upon us, and weaken our strength in the work, come not, I am sorry to say, from the other side of the globe, but arise from the state of the churches in our own land. There is nothing disheartening in the intelligence which reaches us from abroad, but we are grieved with the lukewarmness at home. We are not straitened in the promise, or providence, or grace of God, but we are straitened, most sadly straitened, by the apathy, and worldliness, and declension of the church. Oh, for a general and powerful revival of religion! We must have it. The work cannot advance in any other

way. It is impossible for the stream to rise above the fountain.

A permanently flourishing state of personal religion furnishes the only soil, in which such a plant as this can strike its roots so deeply, as to live and grow. Secure for us more vital piety here at home, more communion with God, more sympathy with the Saviour in his great work, and a more cordial reliance on the aids of the good Spirit—month by month, and year by year—and there need be no further fear that the cause of Christian missions will be forgotten. We cannot labor, with any heart, for those in foreign lands, while we feel no concern for our next-door neighbors. We cannot offer earnest prayer, and give cheerfully of our substance, to save the heathen, while we are careless about the prospects of our own children and friends. Only let the Spirit be shed upon us, in copious measure, and from those very churches among us, which now seem like a wilderness, shall waters break out, and where all looks now like a desert, streams of salvation shall go forth.

Our duty, Christian friends, all converges to a single point. It is prayer, prayer—prayer for the Spirit that we need. Such prayer as was offered by that little band that waited at Jerusalem for the promise of the Father. Such prayer as Brainerd offered on the banks of the Susquehanna, and Martyn on the plains of India. Such prayer as was offered by the dying Backus, when he asked for the privilege of getting out of his bed, to lift up his soul

once more to God. This is a blessing which we cannot do without. I would call, then, upon every blood-bought disciple of the Saviour here this evening; I would lift up my voice in notes loud enough to reach every Christian in the land; I would send out an affectionate exhortation to our brethren and sisters abroad, and say, Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

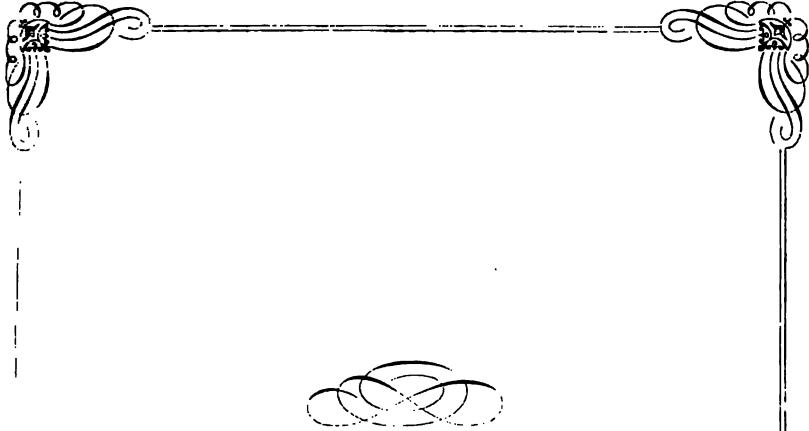
Go ask your Father in heaven, that the coming twelve months may be signalized everywhere, among the churches here and at all our missionary stations in nominal Christendom, and in lands of pagan darkness, by the pouring down upon us of the Spirit of God.

I feel emboldened to press this point, because I know that if that voice could reach us again, to which we loved to listen on these hallowed occasions, and which was heard in tones of such sublime serenity, amidst the ocean's roar and the work of death, it would be lifted up with more than all its former pathos and power, to charge us to pray for the Spirit of God. Two things, that beloved brother never forgot—the atonement of Christ, and the work of the Spirit. I knew him well from the time when his face was first irradiated with the smiles of a newly cherished hope, until the Master came, in the midst of storm and waves, and darkness, to call him to himself; and I can testify, that never, at home or abroad, in the repose of his own

fireside, or the fatigues of journeys, did he forget his indebtedness to Christ and the Spirit.

Blest saint ! His voice is hushed, but his example shall not be lost upon us. His presence is no more seen here, but we will remember the cheerful and confiding features of his face. We miss him from our assemblies, but we know that he still loves the heathen.

That good man is gone, and we shall never all meet again. Whatever acquaintance most of us can hope to have in this world, we are forming now in this holy convocation, while deliberating on the great interests of the Redeemer's kingdom among men, and renewing our pledges of fidelity to him over the symbols of his broken body, and shed blood. Oh, may our intercourse be such that we shall review it with pleasure, when we come to cast our crowns at the feet of Immanuel.



REV. DR. FERRIS'S DISCOURSE

BEFORE THE

**AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR
FOREIGN MISSIONS,**

At their Thirtieth Annual Meeting,

SEPTEMBER 12, 1848.



Thy Kingdom Come.

A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED AT BOSTON, SEPTEMBER 12, 1848,

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR

FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AT THEIR

THIRTY-NINTH ANNUAL MEETING.

BY REV. ISAAC FERRIS, D. D.,

NEW YORK CITY.

BOSTON:

PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN, 24 CONGRESS STREET.

1848.



BV
2075
.A64
1848

DISCOURSE.

*Venerable Fathers and Beloved Brethren
in our Lord Jesus Christ :*

I CONFESS to you, that in view of my appearance before you to conduct your meditations, by your own appointment, I have felt myself much at a loss in the selection of a suitable theme.

So many years have transpired since this annual service was begun, and so many and such able pens have been employed, that it seemed to me that every aspect in which our great work could be, has been presented, and that I could hope to say nothing which would attract by its novelty or its peculiarity. But I have been rebuked by the reflection that this most blessed work never loses its freshness ; that what has interested will still interest ; what has commanded the heart will still command it, though often called up. This is the peculiarity of God's plans and works ; while man's inventions become monotonous and fail in their hold on the mind.

In my dilemma I have taken counsel of the occasion, and asked myself why this solemn convocation, why this gathering of Christian brethren from every part of this land? Is it to learn "some new thing," like the ancient Athenians? Is it not to have our minds and hearts refreshed by mingling in meditation on the characteristics of our work? Is it not to contemplate the progress of that work, and thank God and set out with new courage? If this be so, I feel that one great point will be gained, if we may take our places at our Master's feet and learn of Him; and this I would seek in this exercise.

Let us transfer ourselves mentally to the scene depicted in the fifth of Matthew. We behold there our dear Lord in the midst of an intensely interesting throng, removed from all the exciting circumstances of the world. It was a mountain sanctuary, the broad expanse of heaven the canopy. He develops clearly and beautifully the spirit which he would have his disciples cultivate; he clears away the false interpretations of the divine law which had debased the people; he leads them into just views of the practical course his system required; he teaches them duty and devotion; what a scene! The Master inducting his chosen ones into the mode in which they should approach the throne of the heavenly grace, and what subjects should occupy the mind and the heart! It is there, our object as men laboring that truth and righteousness may fill the earth, has a special and prominent place. Thus shalt thou pray, "Thy kingdom come." Oh, I would that we could here for a moment lose all

thought of official relations, and realize the simplicity and sublimity of that scene, and, taking part with that assembly as learners, bring every circumstance strongly home to our own hearts. This is the theme which our Great Teacher gives for our meditations—

THY KINGDOM COME.—MATT. vi. 10.

And may His Holy Spirit aid us, while we bring ourselves to the contemplation of what is here involved.

My Brethren, you will observe,

I. That our object as a missionary association, seeking to establish the kingdom of righteousness, is commended *by the highest authority* in the church of God. He who speaks is the Head over all things to the church, who has all power given unto him in heaven and upon earth.

To the inquiry what kingdom is intended by this petition, we can be at no loss for an answer. Two kingdoms in general are spoken of in the word of God, *viz* : his providential kingdom or his sovereignty, and his kingdom of grace. Of the former it is to be remarked it is universal. Ever since there has been a world or a created being, this kingdom was “come.” Universal, unlimited dominion, supreme sovereignty, belong necessarily to God. And though many of his intelligent creatures neither acknowledge nor know him as their God, over all, his might and his goodness are constantly exercised. Of this it is said, “ His kingdom ruleth over all.” He is Lord of lords, and King of kings—the King

of the nations of the earth. All wait upon him and receive the daily supply for their wants. "In him we live, move, and have our being."

There is another kingdom spoken of in the sacred word—one not yet fully come, and that is the gospel kingdom, or the kingdom of grace. Of this it was prophesied by Daniel, five centuries before Christ, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." A careful comparison of the portions of the chapter, preceding this verse, proves indubitably that the kingdom of the Messiah, or the gospel kingdom, is the one contemplated by Daniel. The prevailing opinion in the time of our Lord was, that a mighty kingdom was to be set up. Hence the inquiry of the Pharisees (Luke 17:20) "when the kingdom of God shall come." With this our Lord's mind was naturally filled, and as naturally he commended it to the affections and devotions of his disciples. Having given a distinct place to this in his first recorded discourse, he made it the subject of charge in closing his ministry on earth. That command, "Preach the gospel to every creature," bequeaths to the church the same object.

And what do we seek, but to take up the work as left by those who have gone before, and carry the Scriptures to every benighted, revolted heart; to convey the message of mercy to the lost wanderer; apply the balm of Gilead to the stricken soul; recover the rebel and bring him as an humble

devotee at the feet of the God of heaven ; seeking that the kingdom of grace may fully and triumphantly come to all and over all ? Does our Lord commend this work ? We can ask no higher warrant. We know we are right. Our work is taken altogether from the category of theories and speculations, and ranges with solemn realities which bear the impress divine.

Most comforting, blessed conclusion ! If our hearts at any time hesitate, this will re-nerve them. If our brethren become affected by unbelieving apprehensions, this is the key to remove every difficulty and rally their energy anew. What more potent than the consideration, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" 'Tis our Father's work we do, our Father's will we obey. There are times when it is especially proper to dwell on this. One of these is, when results are reached so slowly, and then are so stinted, that the benefactions of the church seem almost as committed to the deep. Then, to refer to this starting principle—"It is God's work ; we are right"—settles all the discouragements and difficulties of appearances, and rallies the wasting energies. Another season is, that when the sympathizing heart contemplates the sacrifices and trials of the convert from heathenism, and reasons, 'Why place the unhappy creature in situations of such danger ? Do we well to disturb him ? Do we well to call him to the adoption of what will almost necessarily provoke suffering and entail sorrow upon his life ?' With all other views and considerations, this comes in, to quiet the sympathetic questioner, 'This work is

of God ; it is commended to us by him who was all tenderness and love.'

Yes, its application goes beyond this. The enemy sneers and calls us enthusiasts and ranks our work with the crusades, as an effort after notoriety and excitement. He sneeringly tells us, the clergy must have something to occupy the imaginations of their supporters, some schemes or theories about which feeling and eloquent appeals may be made, and by which they may secure their hold on the un-thinking. The question is, 'Whom shall we regard, God or man?' Have we God's warrant, it matters not how the world sneer ; the work will prove itself to be the work of God, and it may be that passage shall find its verification in our day, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish."

Oh, that we could feel always the full force of the divine authority under which we act. Difficulties will arise. Men of Sanballat's spirit will be found, who will, by every stratagem, and even under the pleasing guise of friendship, seek to retard the work. We need to feel accordingly, as the ancient servant of God did, "I am engaged in too great a work ; I cannot come down to you." Ah, how well would it have been, had we always realized under whom we were engaged ? Are we not reminded here of our failings. Has the divine authority in this matter been so fully before our minds as it should have been ? Have we not too much regarded this as an affair of men ? Have we not failed, as we looked up, to lose all thought of human agencies and organizations ? If there is one thought which, before all others, should be present with, and

press heavily on the mind, and one of especially sustaining power, it is this—*our work is commend-ed by the highest authority redeemed creatures know.*

II. You will observe, that this object, commend-ed by our Lord, is one of *vast moment.*

The first thing which should call out our anxiety, is our own personal interest in the precious blood of the Lamb. The concern of one's own salvation is of incalculable moment. And all the circumstances and considerations which give it importance, give character and importance to the object before us. Yes, they are multiplied as many fold as the persons are numerous whom we seek to benefit. The field is the world, with its ten hundred millions of immortal beings, whose interests for two worlds are involved. Our arithmetic fails in its attempts to give a just estimate of one soul ; how much more that multiplied into ten hundred millions. Sitting at the feet of such a Master, we expect naught but mat-ters of most weighty character to fall from his lips.

My brethren, must we not attach something to the place which our Lord has assigned this subject. We call this our model prayer. Its order means something. It is framed on the same principle with the law of the ten commands, embracing first what relates to Deity, as first in order and importance. Here stands second in order, and in close connection with kindred petitions, *this*, involving our great missionary aim. And how is the glory of the Highest, that chief end of rational being, concerned in this enterprise ? Its success is *the setting up*

of rightful, divine authority in the hearts of men. Ever since the fall, a usurper, himself the arch-transgressor, has had control. The hand of the true God was every where, around men and on them, and with them, opening the channels of every comfort, bestowing the bounty of his goodness in divine exuberance ; yet they knew him not, and of course acknowledged him not, but gave his glory to another, whose yoke they wore, and who led them “captive at his will.”

This yoke should be broken ; and only as it is broken, are immortal beings recovered to their true position, and is the harmony of the moral universe restored ; thus only is the rightful authority of Him who should have all hearts, exalted to its true place ; and will Jehovah receive that revenue of glory which is his due. To accomplish this, is an aim worthy the intelligences above, while it is that which our Lord places here in the foreground to command our hearts.

And *in its results*, how glorious does Jehovah appear, while man is made unspeakably blessed ? Let this kingdom come, and the heralds of the cross shall have unfurled the banner of the Lamb on every high place, and streaming from a thousand centres, the light of salvation shall irradiate every dark point. Truth shall have triumphed over error, holiness over sin, joy supplanted sorrow and sadness. Lisping infancy shall bring its early sacrifice, sprightly youth join its hosannas, the strength of manhood bow itself in adoration, while old age shall bless God and depart in peace. Let it come, and then he who bled on Calvary, and whose success up to this time is in

sad contrast with the merit of his sacrifice, shall see of the travail of his soul in having the harvest of a world gathered to his fear, and having every knee bow and every tongue confess he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Let the kingdom come, and then mercy shall reign over a universe of guilty, helpless and wretched immortal beings. In the case of a single sinner, how does that word, "Go in peace, your sins are forgiven you," chase away a thousand fears, dispel the deepest gloom, and ease the aching heart ! how it illuminates with hope, how it animates with joy ! What an era, when every dejected mind shall know its blessed influence, and every bleeding bosom be staunched by its balm, and throughout the broad earth mercy, mercy shall reign ! Let the kingdom come, and righteousness shall fill the earth. Too long have men groaned under the dominion of iniquity in its various forms. Unjust lording of man over his fellow, the triumph of money and rank over right and principle, corruption, falsehood and imposture have had an influence most detrimental to human interests. What can be conceived more delightful than an era of principle ; when every bosom, in every department of human society, shall know none but righteous feelings ; when unbending integrity shall distinguish every member ; when selfishness shall give place to that love which takes every man to its bosom as a brother, and the only rivalry shall be a rivalry in virtue !

Let the kingdom come ; and, as its principles are at utter variance with every malevolent feeling, there shall be no more envy, nor disquiet, nor tur-

moil. Our world shall be no more harassed with the iron sceptre of the despot. No Genghis Khan, nor Tamerlane, nor royal, nor imperial murderers shall send their millions to an untimely grave. The spears shall be beaten into pruning hooks, and the swords into plough shares, and nations shall learn war no more. Let the kingdom come, and all are happy. The individual is happy, the family is happy, society is happy, and the world is happy. How glorious this series of results to Him who planned the scheme of mercy ; who in the counsels of eternity had thoughts of mercy and purposes of peace ; who has spread out his plans of good on the sacred page, and thus fulfills every promise on which the fathers trusted, and especially redeems the pledge given to the Messiah, “ I will give thee the heathen for thy inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.”

Compare this with any other enterprise in which men have embarked their energies and have lavished their treasures. Compare it with all those which have so yoked national prowess to the car of war, and how large and glorious it looms !—God glorified and our race happy !—it exceeds all beside.

The appeal of our enterprise is to all of the man and all of the Christian in us ; the development of heart to which it leads brings it into closer union with, while it secures greater likeness to the great source of all excellence. Well did our Lord place so high in the pleas of the devotional spirit this—Thy kingdom come. Can we well rate it too highly ? Do we err in regarding it as comprehensive of all good ?

You will remark again,

III. This object of such vast moment is commended as *one of common interest*. What an interesting position that of our Lord in the historic picture before us ! What is he ? The mere philosopher, the head of some new school, propounding the theories by which he hopes to astonish the world ? No. But the endeared friend, in the midst of the circle whose warmest affections cluster around him ; the father in the midst of his beloved family circle, addressing them as having common interests, common duties, common aims. A common object carries them to the mercy seat ; a common appellation is addressed to the glorious One to whom they look. Our Lord makes no distinctions, he marks no differences. The "our," and the "us," bring into beautiful unity before the throne all claiming to be disciples, however differing in the adventitious circumstances of the world. Thus "Thy kingdom come" is as directly and decidedly each one's, as "Our Father which art in heaven ;" in other words, the coming of this kingdom is the great affair of the Christian family.

I do not see how we can draw any other conclusion. This is not our work as ministers ; much as we may love it and cherish it and labor for it, it is not ours alone. One of the mistakes into which many seem to fall is, that the responsibility here rests specifically, if not entirely, on the ministry. Their share of interest is and should be large, but it can by no means be exclusive. We cannot lose sight of the family idea in this band of Christian brotherhood. The manner in which some shake off respon-

sibility and leave the ministry alone, indicates an entirely wrong view of the place the officer occupies. The ministry is a merciful office, growing out of the infirmities of men; it is a *monitorial* agency. Its duty is explanation, appeal, expostulation, counsel, reminiscence. It is the mere helper. It necessarily involves the idea of other interest in addition to its own.

Nor is this work, of interest only to missionaries. Devoted men, they plead to an absorbing feeling here, but we can allow them nothing of primary right beyond other members of our family. Their form of duty grows out of the necessities of the case. Yonder on our borders and beyond the ocean are the hundreds of millions among whom it is desirable this kingdom should come. But how shall they hear of it? How shall they understand and feel its claims, unless some one shall be its messenger to them? The inquiry is, "who will go for us, whom shall we send?" The missionary steps out to the foreground and responds, "Here am I, send me." Not that the missionary band have any more duty than any other member of the family circle, but they will be the agents in one form of duty required. We cannot accordingly fold our arms and talk admiringly of the devotion of this agent and say, 'Oh! the kingdom will come, the missionary is in the field.' Strictly, in the spirit of this prayer, an interest as deep and absorbing as that felt by him should be felt and cherished by every one who prays, "Our Father—hallowed be thy name—thy kingdom come."

Nor is this again, the burden of a few zealous hearts gathering in little clusters among the churches. It is a burden put on every Christian heart by our divine Teacher. We have been wrong, sadly wrong on this point. The number in our churches is small, of those who entertain a deep and lively interest here. A mere handful in each church—perhaps composed of Christian sisters and few beside—or some master spirits in a missionary association lead the way and do the work. Contributions have come from various sources, very promiscuous indeed—but they have come in many a case, as of course, or because a special call was made. As for living, heartfelt interest, such interest as sends up the prayer which moves the arm of a gracious omnipotence, where do you find it? Alas! with five of a hundred of the nominal members of the Christian household! Why must constant appeals be made? why special agencies traversing the field without cessation, if the true feeling is cherished. Why the deficiency in the means of this Board, if the church feels right?

Far be it from me to utter one word unjustly disparaging to the church in general. I cannot bring myself to think I do so, when giving this as fact. The church has not waked up—she has not begun to feel the interest called for and which she must feel if she becomes what the Great Head intended she should be—a missionary family—by giving such a model prayer. There must be the feeling of a common interest if we ever offer this petition aright. There is no one in the whole Christian circle, high or low, official or not, rich or poor, exempt here.

Oh, how can any be listless! How can any one be unmoved, when an object of such vast moment is presented! If there be anything which can touch the inner man, anything which can break up the fountain of the soul's sympathies, it is here, and it is brought home directly by the Lord Jesus Christ to *every one's* bosom. Oh, where is the evidence of having laid our hearts on his altar, or of our breathing his spirit; where the consistency of our professions, or the integrity of our Christian character, if all our interest, or most of it, is given to that which is personal in this prayer; while that which first filled the heart of the Master, is regarded with comparative indifference? Let each of us, my dear brethren, in proportion as others may be remiss here, for himself cultivate a growing and controlling interest in this great work.

We cannot but remark again,

IV. That our Lord, by the very form in which he has put this matter, has made it *the duty of each one to labor* that this great object shall be accomplished.

No one will doubt a moment that this work, had God so pleased, might have been performed by the much shorter process of a special miracle. He who spake, and it was done, who said, Let there be light, and light was, could have scattered the light of life in ways we cannot conceive of, and established his kingdom in the hearts of all men. But he has been pleased to bring this matter under the control of the great principles on which he manages the

world. Miracles have had their place, but his prevailing government is one of means. And we cannot but regard this as both wise and gracious in reference to this petition. It calls out and strengthens the very graces which more especially assimilate to himself, those whose cultivation ministers most to the happiness of the Christian here, and prepares for that which is to follow in the world to come. It is a positive blessing to them to call them to labor. But can there be any mistake about their active co-operation with him? We think not. Can any mind for a moment think that all here is mere ceremonial? He must indeed have a low estimate of the Master, who only esteems him as here suggesting a mere form involving no feeling, no action, no corresponding conduct.

Is not the principle perfectly clear, that *a man is committed to that for which he prays?* Is not this, the principle of this prayer, applicable throughout? All grant that when we are taught to pray for our daily bread, we are not to expect a miracle to be performed, while we utter the prayer and sit inactively down. We all understand this petition as referring to a blessing on our lawful endeavors, to which we own ourselves bound as a means of obtaining the object of our desire. This is so plain, we are all ready to reprove one who may talk of throwing himself on Providence, while he does nothing for himself. There is no drawing distinctions here; we cannot thus reason concerning one part and not of another. The principle is the same; we bind ourselves, by the fact of praying, to every means of securing what we pray for.

Three questions here offer, if this be correct.

Who shall labor?

To what extent?

In what way?

These are most important questions. *Who is bound* to labor that the Kingdom may come? The simple answer is, he that is bound to pray that it may come. And who is he? He that should pray, "Give us this day," &c., "Forgive," &c. Every Christian, every man, that should do the one, is bound to do the other. They stand and fall together. Just as decidedly as *every man* is bound to pursue a lawful avocation for his livelihood, so is he bound to proper measures for the other petition. *How far* shall a man labor or to what extent? Precisely as in the other case, he is bound to employ fairly and honestly, to the utmost, every lawful and appointed means. And this must be his daily employment, to continue as long as he needs to pray for daily bread, or for God to secure his daily sustenance. These two must ever be taken together; for on successfully laboring for one depends the ability of laboring for the other.

Is it inquired in *what way* a person shall labor? The Scriptures inform us, when they refer to the instrumentality which is to bring about the triumph of Christ. The Truth is the great means of converting the soul. It is mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds. This must be brought to bear on the minds of all men, in order to its triumph over all. He who taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come," has ordained, as the law of his church, that this truth shall be preached to every

creature. Speaking thus, as the legislator of his Church, he has made obedience to it a part of Christian morality. According to this view, *every Christian*, as a part of the church, has a share in the responsibility, and must either go himself, or send or support some one who will go in his behalf to spread it abroad ; that is, he must be a missionary or send out and sustain him. The work must be done by the Church, and it involves, in the circumstances of the case, various forms of labor. There are languages to be acquired ; the word of God is to be rendered into the tongues of those who are to be benefited by it. Many must go to them for these purposes, and life must be devoted to them. Now all cannot go ; but there can be, while there is a common responsibility, a division of labor. Many may take the responsibility of the work abroad ; but then on those who tarry at home rests the inalienable obligation to sustain those that go. They can only contemplate them in the light of persons doing, at very great sacrifice, a work which they must otherwise do themselves. To sustain, by pecuniary support, him who labors in the foreign field, loses thus the form of a charity and takes that of an obligation ; and this is as extensive, be it borne in mind, as the duty to pray this petition.

All this is at variance with the view many take ; but it is, in my judgment, the only true one. The missionary enterprise is assigned too low a place, when it is made only a graceful appendage of Christianity, or the means of calling out some scenic display of sympathy. It is made by the circumstances of the human family, or by the condition of

the field to be cultivated—integral to Christian organization. By the will of the Master, a vast work is to be done. It is spread over the world's surface ; and it is his will that every one who goes to the “throne of the heavenly grace,” shall take an earnest, active part in its accomplishment. Our devotion loses its proper character, if this is not carried out. Just as recreant to duty as any one would be, and as certainly inviting refusal at the hands of God, if he prayed for daily bread and labored not for it, or in other words used not the means to obtain it; so is a man recreant to duty who prays, ‘Thy kingdom come,’ and does not strenuously put forth every effort to secure its coming. Yes, as the man dishonors God and the mercy seat, who prays, ‘Give us our bread day by day,’ and does nothing ; so is he guilty who prays, ‘Thy kingdom come,’ and leaves the work to other people. It is gross trifling ; it is insulting God ; it is trampling under foot the great principle of his government, using the instrumentality of men in answering their prayers, for any to pray, ‘Thy kingdom come,’ and fold his arms in indifference. He must *do something* ; and the measure of what he does, must be governed by his circumstances or facilities for action. Would you not have it written with a diamond on every heart, *every one must do something under the dictation of an honest conscience?*

Finally, you will remark,

V. *That for the entire success we must look to and depend on God.*

Why this petition, but to make every heart feel

that we must look away from the arm of man and all his agencies to the special blessing of the Most High? This crowns all. And there is no point presented more strongly and frequently than this. How it runs through all the divine dispensations! “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord,” is as true now as when originally penned. ‘Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God giveth the increase.’ It is delightful to see how the records of the first missionary efforts—for such is the *Acts of the Apostles*—present this precious truth. Those primitive laborers acted fully on the ground we have already taken, that there is a great work for the church to do, and yet referred all to God, and their joy was to acknowledge the hand of God in all. Yes, says Paul to the Romans, “the gospel is the power of God unto salvation.” Fearfully he contended with the enemy at Ephesus, that headquarters of Asiatic idolatry, and most successfully; and his joy after all is, that “you hath *he* quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.” Precious was the harvest at Philippi; it began with this, “whose heart the Lord opened.” Daily thanks he gave for the Thessalonians; and it was he who would have them remember “that the word of God came to them with power and the Holy Ghost.”

With all our doings, this must distinguish us, in our humble and distant imitation of those good men. All must be done in the spirit of dependence, in the spirit of confiding, looking to God. It is his work, and he will own it.

There is nothing in this to enervate Christian effort. He has been but a poor scholar in the

school of Christ, who relaxes his efforts because an absolute influence is not his and he must look to a higher hand. One of the sweetest sources of comfort to the experienced soul is, that he is entirely in God's hands ; and one of his greatest encouragements is, that God reigns over all he does. He loves to lay all at the foot of the cross ; and there it is our privilege to know our missionary brethren love to lie. We speak of primitive missionaries, and we should bless God that our own day furnishes precious illustrations of the same spirit. The probability is, that many of the most delightful examples of simple reliance on God, in our day, are found far away from us among our missionary brethren. Oh, surely we cannot any of us feel too deeply that all our dependence is on God ; that for every step wisely taken, every measure efficiently carried out, every good impression made, every conversion into the kingdom of God, and every advance in our work, we are indebted to the divine blessing ! And as we look forward, this is our hope. For what are we or the whole church unaided, to the difficulties to be overcome ? Who has not wondered, and blessed God in the overflowings of his soul, at the manner in which the results already gained have exceeded the instrumentality employed.

What ! Is the work God's ? We are assured of its success ; it will, it must succeed ; for the Almighty has said it. We may have prudent, wise counsellors ; we may have liberal churches ; we may have learned and able and zealous missionaries, and for all these we will be thankful ; but each will say, "I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me..

In God we boast all the day." Has he not put his seal to this good work in the most marked manner? Has he not shown that he was with us? Is it a small matter that upwards of two hundred thousand converted heathen have been gathered into the fold of Christ; that nation after nation has thrown its idols to the moles and the bats, and erected temples to his worship; that a vast population has been raised from the lowest degradation, both moral and social; that the light of truth has been carried into some of the darkest corners of the world; that the way is now prepared for the largest Christian beneficence to make itself felt on the destiny of the world? This is the Lord's doings; it is marvellous in our eyes; yet it is but the beginning of good, the first fruits of what we are warranted to expect. We have only to go forward in the spirit of Him who dictated this prayer, and we cannot fail. Tell not of failure here or there. In particular cases, special and temporary disadvantages may operate prejudicially; but even these shall at length yield. Tell not of opposition. None could be fiercer and more determined than what was encountered by the primitive missionaries; and yet in three hundred years the coasts of the Mediterranean were studded with Christian churches. Our work is not done in a day, nor in a year, nor in a generation.

And yet we are warranted in anticipating great events, blessed results in our own time. The movements among the nations astonish us. God's hand is in them, and he seems to be preparing the way for what shall much more astonish and delight us. It is a great matter at such a time to be found

at our post, ready to act worthy of the privileges we enjoy, and the blessed relation we sustain to the kingdom of our Lord.

Having contemplated the precious, the momentous truths conveyed by our Lord, let us go to our work with new determination. Having his warrant for and his estimate of this great work, being called to deeper interest, to active effort under the most ample encouragement, we cannot hesitate. We seem to hear anew, coming from the most excellent Majesty, the command, "Say to Israel, Go forward."

Venerable Fathers, far on in your journey to the land where you shall rest from your labors, we would hear from you, with your latest breath, this animating charge. Brethren in the vigor of life, and those just entering on the way, let us take up this cheering charge where these Fathers leave it, and let us join them, and help on the work of God. It is God's work, it is a blessed work, it will go on, whether we are faithful or not. But we will not, cannot consent to have it go on over us as obstacles in the way. We are united, we have one theme,
LET THY KINGDOM COME.

The Bright and the Blessed Destination of the World

REV. DR. COX'S DISCOURSE
BEFORE THE
AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FOR
FOREIGN MISSIONS:

At their Society's Annual Meeting,

AT
PITTSFIELD, MASS.

SEPTEMBER 11. 1849.

THE BRIGHT AND THE BLESSED

(3)

DESTINATION OF THE WORL

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT

PITTSFIELD, MASS. ON THE EVENING OF TUESDAY, SEPT. 11. 1849

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

BY

SAMUEL HANSON COX, D. D.

PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BROOKLYN, N. Y. AND ALTERNATE
PREACHER IN APPOINTMENT FOR THAT YEAR.

Ἐτε τὸ τρίτον αὐτοῦ· Οὐχὶ ἡμῶν ἡτοι γνῶναι χρόνους ἢ καιροὺς δυς ὁ πατὴρ ἐθέρο ἐν
τῷ ὅρᾳ ἐξωστα.—ΑΞΤ. 1: 7.

NEW-YORK:

JOHN F. TROW, PRINTER, 49 & 51 ANN-STREET.

1849.

TO THE
REVEREND JOHN MORISON, D. D. LL. D.
OF LONDON,

CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS

my own dear and estimable friend, who loves the cause in which we are engaged and the country which it is our privilege to live, who has too much critical knowledge of the Scriptures, natural sagacity, soundness of mind, soberness of thought, symmetry of views, strength of combination, firmness of principle, steadiness of purpose, sincere faith, and rational consistency, to regard with any sympathy the patron and vaunted and largely various theories of the pre-millennial advent, however he may love and value, other qualities only, some who, in one or another form, espouse them, those judaizers of the nineteen that would more appropriately grace the ninth century,

THE PRESENT DISCOURSE,

longer than it should be, and longer than it would have been—with due time to make it shorter, pared in the inclement heats of a pestilential summer, amid many distractions and busy cares of office, alternate in appointment taking, in an unexpected moment, the place of the learned and worthy honored principal, Rev. Dr. Goodrich, of Yale College, New Haven, with no time properly to revise, condense, or improve it, and none to re-write it, with all its imperfections of whatever kind, nevertheless, in hope of doing good, if the Lord graciously please so to use it, to whom, in a sense supreme it is more humbly submitted and resigned,

18

VERY AFFECTIONATELY,

AND FRATERNALLY, AND CONFIDINGLY

Augustine,

By the Author.

*Rusurban, Brooklyn, N. York. {
September 29. 1849. }*

DISCOURSE

AND THE KINGDOM AND DOMINION, AND THE GREATNESS OF THE KINGDOM UNI
THE WHOLE HEAVEN, SHALL BE GIVEN TO THE PEOPLE OF THE SAINTS
THE MOST HIGH, WHOSE KINGDOM IS AN EVERLASTING KINGDOM, AND A
DOMINIONS SHALL SERVE AND OBEY HIM.—DAN. 7: 27.

How great the value of such a prediction, such a declaration from the throne of God! It is ancient too, having been on record for more than twenty-four centuries. Daniel wrote it *the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon*,¹ after he had passed the ordinary maximum of life, and had lived more than half a century a captive in that imperial heathen court. From the first deportation² under Nebuchadnezzar, the captivity of Judah had lasted more than fifty years; and from the third and last deportation, about thirty three.³ It was to continue yet nineteen years, as prophecy had fixed it, to the decree of Cyrus,⁴ in their restoration, and as history has since confirmed it, with indisputable precision and verity. It was yet more than five and a half centuries to the birth of Messiah, and the prospect of the captives seemed clouded and dark. It was then that it pleased God to comfort them by means of this rich and rare disclosure to Daniel. It was made to him *in a dream a vision of his head on his bed*. *Then he wrote the dream and the sum of the matters.*

It is indeed a wonderful and pregnant oracle. Its vista of ages, extending from the epoch then present to the second

¹ 555.

² 606.

³ 588.

⁴ 536.

coming of the Son of God; that is, to the end of the world and the terminus of time. It contains the history of the world and of the church in miniature, in brief and comprehensive outline. It thus illustrates and establishes the divinity of our faith, and stands, with other and parallel columns, colossal and impregnable, its plinth reposing on the rock of ages.

Its general connection with the missionary enterprise, however, is our reason for treating it on the present occasion. It ascertains our eventual success. In its calm and just interpretation, it cannot be true, and that enterprise prove a failure. It thus subministers to our poor efforts, a needful and an incomparable encouragement. I state its doctrine thus—

THE WHOLE WORLD, CIVILIZED AND POPULATED, SHALL YET BE CHRISTIANIZED, GOD HAVING ETERNALLY PURPOSED THE GLORIOUS CONSUMMATION, AND REVEALED ITS TRUTH TO HIS GENUINE WORSHIPPERS, NAY, TO ALL MANKIND, for the obedience of faith.

And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

Let us consider some of the instruction derivable from this passage, in five related aspects; namely,

Its scope and import;

Its necessary truth;

Its relation to faith;

Its connection with human agency subordinate; and

Its power to encourage and sustain us by faith; us and especially our laborious and self-denying brethren in the missionary field, while we together prosecute the work, endeavoring the propagation of Christianity and its universal jurisdiction in the world.

I We ponder THE SCOPE AND IMPORT of our text.

The whole vision of Daniel here, as all interpreters agree, is identical in substance, though not at all in form, with that miraculously vouchsafed to Nebuchadnezzar, in the second year

of his reign ; that is, about forty-eight years previously, a then interpreted to the youthful emperor, with such renown, the youthful prophet of Judah. It respects in succession the four great empires of history ; now known as four by all writers, and attested as four by all monuments ; yet then also there, on the two occasions named, first anticipated, distinguished, and foretold, as four, with admirable exactitude and truth, in a way which nothing but the inspiration of the Holy Ghost could authorize and reveal ; namely,

The Assyrio-Chaldaic or Babylonian ;

The Medo-persian ;

The Macedonian or Grecian ;

The Occidental or Roman.

These visions all occurred under the first of these ; the other empires, being all in the future, unknown to all but God, and his people as he was pleased to make the truth known to them. That first empire ceased with the life of Belshazzar,¹ after enduring from the death of Sardanapalus,² about two hundred and nine years ; and in a way not more unique and marvellous, than its very circumstances were described at its hero named, by Isaiah,³ nearly two hundred years before.⁴

The Medo-persian lasted about as long as its predecessor wanting two years, and was terminated by the sweeping victories of Alexander, called the Great ; but described personally in Scripture in a way to excite pity, rather than envy, at his greatness. The empire he founded was soon without its head and his four generals, as prophecy had numbered and described them, after slaying their common rival Antigonus at the bat of Ipsus,⁵ otherwise there had remained five, quartered the world among themselves ; established four co-ordinate but independent regalities, and became kings ; each of the four becoming the head and founder of a distinct but related dynasty ; as in common the successors of Alexander, his countrymen and co-patriots in arms and conquests, speaking and spreading every where the Greek language and literature ; effecting in

portant and preliminary revolutions in all the world ; preparing the way for the missionary spread of the gospel in the first century ; making the nations homogeneous more ; and withal, on the whole—I say it with hesitation—improving them. This third empire we date from the battle of Arbela¹ to that of Actium² or Nicopolis, lasting just three hundred years and terminating thirty-one years previously to the birth of Christ, according to the vulgar era.³ All this outline, only far more minute and particular and identifying, was previously written in the book of Daniel, here and outward, in a way most interesting, and rationally useful and edifying, to the faith of the thoughtful and enlightened Christian.

The battle of Actium made Augustus the sole master of the world, introduced the imperial sway of the Roman Cæsars, which has lasted, through all changes and prodigies, now these eighteen hundred and eighty years, accomplished this very month ;⁴ and is now in its senility, decrepitude, and almost dissolution. Taken together these empires have lasted nearly twenty-six hundred years⁵—a roll of ages how portentous, how charged with the vices and the sins of men, yet more with the mercies and the benefactions of God. Rightly to read history is to read prophecy ; and wisely to compare them is a noble work for the best and the strongest minds, a work pre-eminently of profit, pleasure, and piety.

The two visions, to Nebuchadnezzar and to Daniel, were much unlike in their images and forms, however related, or the same, in their subject-matter ; and I incline to follow Grotius, Lowth, Newton, and others, in the ingenious reasons assigned for it by the first of these ; as founded in the idea of adaptation, respectively, to two very different minds ; the one, a proud but certainly a highly capacious and intelligent pagan ; the other, a spiritual worshipper of the true God, a man of holy character and mature piety. To the one, suiting his imagina-

¹ Or Gaugamela, Oct. 2. 331.

² Sep. 2. 31.

³ More correctly 27 to the birth of Christ.

⁴ Sep. 2. 31+1849=1880.

⁵ 747+1849=2596.

tion of grandeur, it was a superb colossal image, metallic and imperial, with a head of burnished gold, and after parts, successive and distinct, of silver, of brass, and of iron, legs and feet, terminal in rusty threads of iron mingled with clay. To the other, from the raging and stormy ocean, the four winds heaven striving on it, came there *four great beasts*, carnivorous and ferocious: the first, *like a lion and had eagle's wings*; the second, *like to a bear*; the third, *like a leopard, which had up the back of it four wings of a fowl*, the beast had also four heads and dominion was given to it.

The fourth beast was a megatherium of awe and wonder, non-descript, anonymous, yet *dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly, and it had great iron teeth*. *It devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it*. *And it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns*.

This was plainly the empire of Rome, in her foreign conquests, in her imperial state, in her subsequent extension, partition, decay, dismemberment, and destined ruin. As a monster beast, unique and tremendous, I seem to behold it portray in stately horror, and realize with Daniel the lurid magnificence of the scene. There is the mightier land leviathan, filling the field of vision and darkening all heaven to the sight. Like vast mountain range; as if the Apennines, the Alps, and the Pyrenees, were piled together; his huge proportions stretch from the waters of the Caspian and the sources of the Tigris to the Bay of Biscay and the British Islands, his head and ten horns protruded westward, his orb of empire thither tending and his characteristics mainly developed there.

In the great morass of nations and of ages, there is found a causeway or path of civilization, learning, and the arts strictly described and palpable; where prophecy, anticipating all its course, delights to journey and reside; where the light of revelation shines; where churches are numerous, and the true God is worshipped—or with manifold impiety denied. We find that pathway in the centre of the old Roman empire. We see it progressive toward the west, where the *ten horns* of

beast are none other than the kingdoms of Modern Europe and their dependencies. But why the decimal number to distinguish them, why are they just ten?¹

To answer this question, in this age, is surely to provoke controversy. Are you a literalist or a spiritualist? Do you believe in the pre-millennial advent or only in the post-millennial? in the personal reign of the Redeemer, visible and nominal, at Jerusalem? in the geographic restoration of all the millions of Judah and Israel? I answer—with all these hard questions we are under no very pressing necessity just now of embarrassing our investigations, or of pledging to any partial theory or doting and plausible error. Interpretation is properly a science. In theology especially it hath the dominion. It is one of the grandest and richest and rarest of the sciences; and one that claims affinity, in things sacred, with common sense, with the symmetry of revealed truth, with sanctified learning, with thought mature, and with piety genuine, prayerful, and ripe. It especially rejoices in large and sober and comprehensive views, according to the analogy of faith, and the *truth and soberness* of known principles. In this discourse, however, we can only give results, and these in brief outline and generality evinced.

The ten horns, like the seventy years captivity, I construe as a number medial or symbolical. It denotes the average or general quantity alone. No other solution seems tenable. History shows us that after the fifth century, the provinces of the western or Roman empire proper became of necessity abandoned by the drooping metropolis. Of course, they emerged organized states, as well as independent territories. They were fewer than ten at one time, more at another. The literalizers have failed here, as well as in other places. Their contradictions to history, to each other, and to themselves, are marked and amusing and instructive. Their scheme seems impracticable, unwise, false. Its fruits condemn it too, from

¹ The toes of the image first suggested it here, as the fingers to the first that commenced the elements of arithmetic.

the fanatical Muggleton to the incorrigible Miller,¹ with the injured votaries and outraged victims. Some of them indeed a wiser and better men ; but here we view them as lame, weak doting, vulnerable, wrong. And remarkable it is that the disciples, I might say the dupes, of all this way, are distinguish generally for their aversion or hostility to missions. So I have adventured to utter the prediction that no more are to be converted, till after the temporal-personal reign of Christ on earth is commenced. Vain and presumptuous folly ! It is even madness. We have lived to see it, by living demonstrations, false ; its doctors and its proselytes contradicted and confounded. But—enough.

It was in the west that another horn, all of its own so was seen to grow and prosper. It subverted three of the ten horns ; *and behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man*

¹ I once heard this venturous and very ignorant interpreter, at Washington, February 1844, telling all his scheme, before a large promiscuous audience, with the unction of bounded self-confidence. "The advent" then was to be equinoctial or near it ; and he his prospect glowed, as his feelings kindled with proximity to that object, after so long anticipation. It was near the last of the month, two or three days only before the explosion of the Peace-maker, and consequently three or four weeks only before the great apocalyptic crisis of wonders, when all his predictions, and all the expectations of his proselytes, certain, accordingly and finally, as they in common affirmed,

Surer to prosper than prosperity
Could have assured them,

were to be all —— NOT accomplished ! A similar farrago of devout foolishness is still heard. Such violations at once of chronology, history, quotation, logic, grammar, pronunciation, and good manners—especially to some who ventured in a perfectly decent way withdraw before his pitiable talk was finished, I never witnessed till then : nor can I conceive of a much greater nuisance in society, especially among the credulous and ill-informed, than a prophet of such bold and imposing hallucinations. However sincere he might be, or monomaniacal, or ridiculous, he deserves something like the indignation or rebuke of the country and the church and the world ! The mischief he has done is manifold and incalculable !—though his fallacies are now a proverb. 2 Tim. 3: 9. I have also heard one of his suffragans publicly denounce missions and predict no more conversions—till his master's calculations are punctually verified by the advent ! I believe last adjournment is till April 3. 1850—after which I would recommend to them, April 1851. But a cloud of little Millers are now flying over the country, and will pester foolish for some time to come. *Therefore I said, surely these are poor ! they are foolish for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God.* Fanaticism on this subject is a curiosity as well as a delusion, and a crime, and a moral pestilence !

and a mouth speaking great things. By this is plainly meant the system of the paparchy, or the power of the popedom, with its triple crown, uniting the sword and the keys ; as if the fugitive or suppliant pope in our own day were truly God on earth ! But if his mystic person is described, so the doom is written of him and his, long ago, in the oracles of God : in Daniel, in Paul, and in John, with grand coincidence, and one would think, with unmistakable certainty. *I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake : I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws : and they shall be given into his hand, until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion to consume and to destroy it unto the end.* The seventeenth chapter of Revelation corresponds with this part of the seventh of Daniel. The ten horns are there ; and the connection with them, patronizing and patronized, of the infamous harlot that affects to be the spouse of Christ, and is not, is well displayed : and said the angel to John, in the progress of the vision, *the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire ;* an operation, my brethren, in the providence of God, somewhat gradual, well deliberated, perfectly controlled, and now in process, though seemingly prolonged, before our eyes. Can we not discern the signs of the times ? What need be more intelligible than the late events in Europe, as far as they go, touching the *man of sin, the son of perdition, that ANOMOS of prophecy, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming ?*

The removal of the Roman Antichrist, in which I include the habitudes of oriental Rome and the Romanizing corruptions of the total Greek church, the execrable formalism, east and west, which, having murdered Christianity in their own way, are now decorating and worshipping the residuary corpse, as if it were alive ; the destruction of all this multiform organization of hor-

rors, inimical alike to reason, to piety, and to Scripture, is probably the event next proximate to our own times, which we are to expect. Here indeed we are to be modest, not dogmatical as some scholars and theologians of eminence have not only required us, very justly, to separate between opinions and oracles, but have also not disdained to spurn all calculations of the time as visionary and fabulous; dismissing with a sneer of millennial arithmetic, as they call it, and scouting it away from them, as they sit serene on their intellectual thrones, incorruptible and non-committal and unenvied. But I demur, observing these two things: 1) They seem to do rather a cheap work; they destroy, but do not replace or edify. They deal themselves in negations, of no use, annoying to honest faith, and quite dogmatical, to say the least, as are any positions which they have learnedly decry. 2) Where in the mean time leave they the millennial arithmetic of the Holy Ghost? They lose it—Germany. I read what they say, and return to my blessed Bible, to find vacuity, insipidity, and worse than the ambiguity of the heathen oracles. Hence I neither thank them for the wisdom, nor choose to receive it; surely thinking that the old is better.

God has never written the prophecies, says Sir Isaac Newton, to make men prophets; but that when the event appears to explain the prediction, his own foresight, not that of the interpreter, may be acknowledged and honored. I add, it is also his plan to give all necessary and practical instruction to his people, of the fortunes that are before them, of the system of his providence, of the prospects of his church, of the end of his government, and of the great events, affecting the destinies and the duties of his servants, which he intends to order and effectuate. Hence, his frequent benediction pronounced on the sober, the humble, and the devout study of prophecy—other methods or kinds of study being justly cursed with the plague of blindness, as well as the sin of pride.

With these things premised, I announce my own conviction that the revealed lifetime of the papacy is twelve centuries and three-fifths of years; that this famous period of twelve hundred

and sixty, is a number not literal and absolute, but medial and proportional ; that if we seek in vain for its *terminus a quo* or starting point, in order to find its *terminus ad quem* or point of termination, this is not so wonderful, as that wise and pious men should repudiate or stultify the very *words which the Holy Ghost teacheth*, because they have not yet learned their proper import or use. The great epochs in the gradual rise of the *man of sin*, which history signalizes, may be intrinsically of less importance than we imagine. The events which occasioned them are but signal developments, of that pre-existing apostacy from Christ and his gospel, which God saw and noted, if men did not, irrespective of those developments. A ferocious and treacherous pard, is a beast of terror and blood independent of his color, his attitude, or his cage ; the same in character when dormant, or couchant, or levant, as when guardant, or rampant, or saliant, or combatant ; to use the language of the heralds. Sleeping or waking, fawning or devouring, its spirit is one and the same. As the great *mystery of iniquity*, it was alive, though not suspected or known, in the days of Paul. It was then in recent embryo, working and growing for future manifestation, *that he might be revealed in his time* ; for birth, augmentation, maturity, and ultimate destruction too !

Its nature is quite intelligible to any one that understands the character of fallen man. It is that germ and form of human depravity, that commonly prefers self to God ; that continually says *excelsior* to its own vaulting ambition ; that agitates no other apostolic question, with half so much sincerity or engagedness, as this—*who shall be the greatest?*¹ and that, blinded and blinding, by the very glare of sacredness that

¹ Mark 9: 34. The original here has only two words, more strong, graphic, familiar, and natural, than any translation—*εἰς μεῖλην*. The insidious pravity of that impulse has deceived, actuated, and ruined—how many ! Our ecclesiastical history is mainly a record of crimes and enormities as the consequence. Yet the history of the external church, through the long night of THE APOSTACY—as Paul calls it, *ἡ ἀπόστασις*, 2 Thes. 2: 3—is often the history of apostates only : while the saints of God *fled into the wilderness*, and constituted the church invisible in more senses than one ; leaving corruption to its own orgies, and glories, and miseries in the end. An apostatical succession of religionizing criminals in the main ! Rev. 11: 1-13. 12: 14-17.

surrounds it, in the high places of the church, becomes presently, yet by degrees there, an idol substitute for the living God himself ; eclipsing and superseding Christ in his own place, and dictating right and law to the nations, with a spurious and factitious dignity that *exalteth itself above all that is called God or that is worshipped !*

Hence we apply the number as the seventy years of captivity are applied ; not absolutely and from one epoch ; the epochs there are several, signal, and lasting through a score of years. The decree of Cyrus for the return of the Jews, was not seventy years from the destruction of Jerusalem and the conflagration of the temple, but only about fifty. It was about seventy however from the first deportation. They were removed gradually and through successive years and periods and in the same way were they restored : while seventy years show the exact and proper period, medial and proportional, their whole captivity. Analogously we apply the twelve hundred and sixty years of the grand apostacy as the predestined period of its horrible lifetime. And if in this we truly learn the very lesson which God designed to teach, we may be not the least wise, whatever others are, since we are more than content with it ; knowing enough in the main, till events in providence become the perfect exposition and gnomon of the words of prophecy.

We all know how long, how gradual, how exacting, how cumulative, and how successive, were the demonstrations of its rise ; why should we not think its downfall will be similarly graduated and prepared and done ? Look back to the signal times of Wicklif, or earlier, to the condition and migration of the popes and their retinues just before the day began to break on the thick and palpable darkness of the medieval ages ; to the bewildered policy that first broke the chain of their time-honored and saintly treason against God and man ; to their signal expatriation from Rome to Avignon in the early part of the fourteenth century. After seventy years they returned—thoroughly miserably of their strength ; like Samson from the ~~hand~~ of Delilah. Since then, they have never recovered what they

lost. On the whole, all their changes, as ordained and ruled in providence, have been mainly like those of the invalid, growing weaker and weaker, till consumption ends in death. What is papacy now to papacy in the eleventh century; what Pius Ninth to Gregory Seventh, the noted Hildebrand? The difference is great indeed; for beastly terror and persecuting dismay comparable only as the roar of Niagara to the wail of infancy for boldness and power, only as the politics of the nursery to the march of Hannibal, or the whine of mendicity to the wrath of Theodosius. The dead corpse of the papacy may be galvanized by the doctors, or the spasms of dissolution be mistaken for the vigor of convalescence: but dying or dead, on the scaffold or in the sepulchre, it is a doomed traitor, and its end is at hand; its sentence is written irreversible, its punishment is capital and inevitable, and God himself is the executioner, in his own omnipotent and adorable providence. Its orgies were suffered only for a limited season; and only for ends sublime, tremendous, wise! Its epitaph was written before its birth—its wickedness cursed in heaven, from all eternity and to all eternity, with equal justice, truth, and power.

When this grand obstacle to the truth is removed, others will soon follow in course: as the fall of Islam, or the ruined delusion of the prophet of Arabia; the conversion of the Jews to the true Messiah; the universal propagation of the gospel and its ascendancy among the nations; the ages of the long-desired millennium, the earth being full of the knowledge of the glory of God, and all flesh rejoicing together in his salvation. *And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one. For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. As truly as I live, so hath God sworn, at the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.*

Our text is full and conclusive. It is not so much a star of the first magnitude, in the vision of faith, as a constellation of glories; glowing, in the firmament of power, as with the sweet influences of the Pleiades or the guided grandeur of Arcturus with his sons. Rich, vast, and overwhelming as is the thought

inspiring and exhilarating to our souls, there is something in it more gorgeous than the rainbow, brighter than the sun, more transporting than poetry ; I mean, what we are next to contemplate,

II ITS NECESSARY TRUTH ;
that is, we arrive at the sublime result, not by speculation, not by philosophy, not by any sagacity or wisdom of man ; but by consulting the oracles of God.

What is inspiration, if it make not God the speaker in the text ? The general meaning is definite and plain : and it is true, because the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. It is true necessarily ; because he cannot err, or change, or be deceived, or violate his own glorious veracity—to which he never saw a motive. Would he raise the pious expectations of his people, only to dash and disappoint them ? How could his Spirit dictate the words, to his holy amanuensis in the court of Babylon, brave specimen indeed of moral asbestos that he could so long and so well preserve his integrity there ; how could the spirit indite the text, unless it had been decreed in heaven, from all eternity, that this apostate world should be reclaimed to its duty and the favor of its God ? This great globe that inhabit, spinning noiseless on its axis, as it keeps its steady annual around the sun, a part of the great clock-work of the solar system, is leagued physically with the throne of God, the holy architect of all ; what we call the attraction of gravitation invisibly controlling it, according to the related harmonies of the planetary and the sidereal universe. Awful is its order, and unceasing its motion, progressive and rotary ; grand and glorious and exact the perfection of its periods. And has no sublimer league with the throne of God ? The sin on its surface would induce us to suspect the contrary—that the curse of abandonment is to smite it, with the tangent described alone of the force centrifugal, flying like thought away from its peaceful and proper centre, till regions of interminable night and eternal winter, *the blackness of darkness for ever*, should alienate from the holy universe, and sepulchre its being in the living

death of horror and despair. But the plan of our God is gracious and everlasting. This very sinning globe of ours is to be increasingly the selected theatre of his own clustering wonders and prodigies of philanthropy.

For he whose car the winds are, and the clouds
 The dust that waits upon his sultry march,
 When sin hath moved him and his wrath is hot,
 Shall visit earth in mercy ! shall descend
 Propitious, in his chariot paved with love,
 And what his storms have blasted and defaced
 For man's revolt, shall with a smile repair.

He never will change his plan or fail in its accomplishment. What are obstacles to him ? In his own time and way, they will all melt like mountains at his presence, fly like feathers before the spirit of the storm. He can move them in a way as easy, as he speaks of them. Is his style easy ; is it full, august, and perfectly assured ? Is he perplexed, because we are, with the complications of his own work ? Omniscience sees all things in perfect simplicity ; past, present, future ; actual, possible, hypothetical ; desirable in any given degree, and in every conceivable relation, or the reverse as well. With him is no dubitation, no confusion, no failure, no mistake ; and with him, no hurry and no tardiness, no delay or hesitation, no intermission or deviation ; but only steady, unchangeable prosperity, the ever operative and harmonious plans of infinite perfection, enthroned and regnant, by eternal right, in his own universe ; and for ends as admirable as the universe is vast, or as God is good and wise and happy, *over all, blessed for ever.*

The Lord of all, himself through all diffused,
 Sustains and is the life of all that lives.
 Nature is but a name for an effect
 Whose cause is God. He feeds the secret fire
 By which the mighty process is maintained,
 Who sleeps not, is not weary ; in whose sight
 Slow-circling ages are as transient days :
 Whose work is without labor, whose designs
 No flaw deforms, no difficulty thwarts,
 And whose beneficence no charge exhausts.

There is such a thing as Christian optimism, the genuine theistic system of God. All Scripture sings it to our soul. All events subserve its accomplishment, all nature expects its triumph, all heaven enjoys its everlasting glory. *All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee. Whosoever the Lord pleased, that did he, in heaven, and in earth, the seas, and all deep places. The works of the Lord are great and sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. His work is honorable and glorious; and his righteousness endureth for ever. He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered. The Lord is gracious and full of compassion. The Lord shall rejoice in his works. Ascribe ye greatness to our God, the Rock. His work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.* God acts always and every where. He does millions of acts, continually, and even moment, and for ever. Now, we ask, in reference to his acts, each of them, all of them, every part of the vast whole, with the measureless circumference of his own omnific agency, any thing he does, capable, as such, of melioration or improvement? Could he ever do it over again and do it better? Learns he wisdom from experience, the pupil of his own creatures? Our position is, that whatever God does, whatever is identified with his agency, is, as such, as good as it can be, as so the best that can be done. This we mean by the bestness of his system, the proper optimism of our Christian theology. Applied to his administration, in that respect which our then and our text require, it raises our glorying in him, to the high tide of confluence with celestial exultation, the alleluias that reverberate through the arches and the cycles of eternity.

There is indeed a bastard and execrable optimism of scholastic infidelity, with which we desire to hold no communion—that which includes all our actions, and all our sins, as such, and makes them the necessary, and the chosen, and the preferred, means, in perfection, of the greatest possible good. This theory, suiting exactly Mirabeau, Condorcet, Voltaire, and other purblind enemies of God, not a few, we may not now pause to refute—but only to denounce, as both antisciptural and

positively impious, equally contrary to wisdom and to worship, equally a disgrace to intellect and an offence to integrity equally a blunder and a crime ; not the less when perpetrated sometimes directly or indirectly even by preachers and divines

To the thoughtful mind of the Christian, the desired consummation appears reasonable as well. He asks, Shall sin triumph on earth for ever ? Is man to continue without redress, always, the maniac of sin, its voluntary and suicidal victim ? Is God to be dishonored and denied, on his own footstool, and in his own presence, here, without end and without vindication ? Is not the seed of the woman destined to crush the head of the serpent ? Shall not his advent succeed, in the utter eventual vanquishment of all his enemies ; and this on the very field of their proud temporary triumphs ? *He that committeth sin is of the devil ; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. And he shall not fail or be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth ; and the isles shall wait for his law.*

However reasonable or desirable it may seem to us, we are not therefore to be wise without or above what is written. Whence, the argument of our text is to be viewed,

III IN RELATION TO FAITH,
our cordial and steady confidence in God, or *godly edifying*, which, says the great apostle, is *in faith*.

Now the edification of faith, the simple-hearted piety of faith, the conviction and the consolation of faith, differ in nature, from all *the sparks that we have kindled*, as they are also in degree infinitely superior. The substitutions of human deceit and pride, the inventions and philosophisms and speculations of men, no matter who, are vapid, childish, contemptible in comparison. We desire, in all our religion, and especially in the work of missions, to walk with God, and so to live by faith, *striving according to his working which worketh in us mightily* ; and this with no intermission, languor, or defection, to the end of our devout and fixed career. Yes, my honored and beloved brethren, holy servants of the only wise and true God

venerable fathers in Christ, who hear me ; ye ministers of the living God, and under him the counsellors of his church, and the guardians of his glorious cause ; and ye, our worthy colleagues of the laity, estimable brethren, intelligent and serviceable friends and helpers to the truth, we greet you with salutations of delight, as united rightly, that is, by faith, with us, in this glorious cause. Oh ! let it never be forfeited or betrayed by the wisdom of men, superseding or adulterating the wisdom of our God ! It is only in his wisdom that we are wise, only in *his light*, that *we see light*. Let me pause here solemnly—and say, *as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God*. Now the way of the Spirit, is to lead us, through the excellent medium of his own word. We wait for his will, study and explore and ascertain it ; and as known, we follow where he leads, doing his will, and feeling his grace, by faith—by faith—by faith, I say, in God, and by faith alone. Faith makes feeling. Sensation follows faith, as faith follows truth. Shall we run before our leader ? Shall we travel without him ? Shall we venture alone ? Shall we teach him—in our arrogance ; or learn of him only with sincere docility ? We glory justly in our adorable leader. Here our devotion is more than pythagorean, each of us—

UNIUS addictus jurare in verba magistri—

Sworn to one master, trustful of his word ;
No other holds or merits our regard.

In congratulating you all, as my beloved, honored, and devoted brethren, I can ask no pardon for expressly saying, that I include, among our worthiest auxiliaries here, the holy sisterhood of the churches ! We are glad to greet these elect ladies at this grand national anniversary of the missionary cause. Their influence is precious and essential and approved of heaven, ~~not~~ in prayers alone. Would God that I could address all their millions in our country at once ! It does them good to attend here, and their faithful influence blesses us for it all the year. It is such their cause and the honors of the sex, that we promote. The scroll of the angel of missions, unfurled in his glory flight through the midst of heaven, is the MAGNA CHARTA also of the

dignities and the destinies of woman, and thus becomes the standard of society, the elevation of the species, and the blessedness of all nations. Hence we rejoice to welcome their inspiring and assisting presence here. Our glory and theirs it to follow Christ. Again, I say, dear brethren, I congratulate you all in this wisdom of missions—believing that there is no other! and *remembering without ceasing in this heavenly relation your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God, even our Father.* The spirit of faith is the spirit of missions. I shall long remember what I think was the last sermon preached in my pulpit by the lamented Armstrong, on this great theme of missions. His text was, *we*, that is, the ministers of God, *we having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.* In that faithful sermon he showed the true source of missionary zeal and missionary achievement, in a way, solemn, luminous, earnest and true. Faith in God, he said, was its inspiration, its vindication, its source and its power.

Equally insidious, therefore, my brethren, and mischievous is the way, too prevalent in these times, of invented substitutions, or learned adulterations, in place of *the truth as it is in Jesus.* We believe that the world is to be reclaimed. The man of no faith or of a diluted and worldly-wise scholasticism compassionates our credulity, plumes himself on his noble philosophy, and inquires, Why do you believe it? Like children and heirs of the kingdom, we reply; Our God has revealed it, because he has determined it; and he will do it, for both these reasons. We believe what he says, and this is our wisdom. If you call it folly, we pity you, and appeal to the day of judgment. *Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent; hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? It is impossible for God to lie.*

Is faith inimical to reason, or only superior and tutelary? Faith, says a good writer, is only reason leaning on the *bosom of her God.* Faith is the friend and the best friend of

reason ; expands, sublimes, and enriches it, with the treasure of God. We may well be indignant at the folly and the falsehood that would at all set reason and faith at variance. It is a deceitful compound of ignorance, indolence, pride, avarice and crude impiety, that would ever prompt us to it.

Our faith in Daniel as the prophet of God, has been shaken in previous ages, only to be ever since the more confirmed & invulnerable. The audacious onset and flourishing malignity of Porphyry, toward the end of the third century, seemed for a time greatly to intimidate the church of God. Some think that Christians, in those persecuting times, were more scared by the audacity of the infidel, than they were in the following century by the heathen zeal and the retrograde madness and the brutal hatred of the apostate emperor, Julian.

The great position of Porphyry, was that the predictions of Daniel were demonstrably written after the events to which they refer, and are therefore only imposture. This he asserted not proved. And to say nothing of the noble way in which the contemporary and subsequent ministers of Christ, and especially Jerome, met and refuted his fallacies, we cannot forget the evidence since accumulated, by which the providence of God confirming the faith of his people, has overwhelmed the pride and folly of their adversaries. More than fifteen centuries have passed since Porphyry went to his account, at *the judgment seat of Christ*. Whatever else is true of him, he is inferior no more ; since *the devils also believe and tremble*. And what is now the demonstration of the matter ? Twice as much, even more, has been accomplished since the death of Porphyry, as had been previously from the days of Daniel. Our retrospective of history, as we have seen, reaches now over a tract of twenty-four, rather twenty-six centuries in all. And what is the character of Daniel the prophet, as read in this comparison with what of his prophecy in the seventh chapter ? I answer, it is all alive and brilliant, as well as lucid, homogeneous, consecutive, though not yet complete ; in demonstration that it was given by inspiration of God. It is all harmonious and proportionate ; a tissue of related symmetries, like the concentric stor

of a circular arch, each part is strengthened by every other part, and is itself a key-stone resisting the common pressure and communicating strength to the whole. It is all one series and a unit, extending consistently through so many ages, from the reign of the Babylonians to the consummation of all things. And it is truly, in the words of Mede,¹ the sacred calendar and great almanac of prophecy, a prophetical chronology of time measured by the succession of four principal kingdoms, from the beginning of the captivity of Israel, until the mystery of God is finished. Let us then, at our present elevated and commanding stand-point, look back through all these centuries since that glorious seer in the courts imperial, from Nebuchadnezzar to Cyrus, wrote by anticipation their history ; and they say, Is it not symmetrical as a gorgeous whole ? Was one-third of it all imposture till the times of Porphyry ? and the subsequent two-thirds all history and inspiration ? where now the three-thirds all combined, in one astounding retrospective sequence, show homogeneous and unique, a magnificent arcade or corridor of related glories, all in keeping, plainly the architecture of God, which neither men nor angels could have planned, or predicted, or fulfilled, or sustained, or accomplished, as we see it at this day, and as posterity shall see it still more glorious, till the temporal expands for coronation in eternity.

All history is tributary to prophecy. Infidels have written the facts that accomplished what their pride and madness disdained to acknowledge as the inspiration that foretold them. Porphyry, Gibbon, Hume, Voltaire, where are your arguments ? where your hell-inspired prophecies ? where your souls ?

And what, my brethren, is our faith ? Shall we believe only that part of the prophetic scroll which the history of the past authenticates ? Shall we be voluntarily blind or darkling as to the glorious future ? God has put his own telescope into our hands ; the light of heaven illumines it ; things to come are the disclosed objects. Shall we not look at them, with steady and sober observation, with calm and confiding inference, with holy

¹ Works, iii. 654.

and gratified persuasion? What! in the same series of a thentic prophecies, which our Lord Jesus Christ express quotes and sanctions, shall we believe all the beasts and no of the angels? all the misery, the mischief, the bloodshed, the heathen horror, the predominating sin, of the long afflict scene; the incessant storming of the sea of empire, with i waves of blood and fire for ever roaring and dashing and d structive? Shall we believe all the preparatory, and none the compensating stages; rejecting only the brightest, and the best, and the last, and the most blessed, of the inspired declar tions? Do we believe them? Hark! It is the voice of G proclaims it. Yes, indeed—*the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.*

How wonderful are the relations of history, how firm and immutable; what tablets of unalterable registration! and yet in their relations how variable, how cumulative, how chang ful—as the scenery of the kaleidoscope. The present is continually becoming the past; the future, the present. Each of us knows in this relation more than Milton or Calvin, or even Scaliger, knew. They are among our ancients. We look at them in aspects and in contrasts, which in their times had no existence. None of them knew the last two centuries in history, of England, of Europe, or of the world. None of them ever heard of Napoleon, or Wellington, or Washington. America was in their day almost a *terra incognita*, comparative nothing; its greatness a trivial possibility of the future. What wonders have since succeeded wonders, till wonders, most, earthquakes are becoming the ordinary course of event; the expected demonstrations of God in providence, God in history, God in prophecy, God in all; illustrating, confirming, accomplishing, his own eternal purposes, *working salvation the midst of the earth*. Let us not forget that spectators as we now are of the scene, so privileged, and with the vast, the recent, and the ancient, constituting, at once, to our large vision

the picturesque of marvels that feeds and entertains it, we are soon to become ourselves spectacles to the gaze and the censure of others—the unborn spectators, an amphitheatre of countless millions of the future, to whom the first half of the nineteenth century, when nearly sixteen added months have finished it, shall be distinctly objective ; and the fitting counterpart of other prodigies, not by us anticipated, which are to make the brighter, perhaps the bloodier, history of the other half. Do we believe God in his own words ; and is our faith so sincere, so luminous, so cordial, as to be operative and constraining too ? What are we doing, each in his own sphere and place and example, public or private, direct or indirect, praying or working, or both, or all of these, in the cause of Christ, and for his manifested glory in the earth ? But, respecting what we are to do—the connection of these coming results

IV WITH HUMAN AGENCY SUBORDINATE, claims our attention.

Whatever the millennium may be in future history, we now view it as a predicted state of piety for long enduring ages ; in which the truth of Christ, and the grace of Christ, shall predominate among all the nations of living men : making them Christians ; restoring them to goodness and to God, as his worshippers and his children ; pacifying all the world ; banishing irreligion and false religion, superstition, bigotry, fanaticism, heresy, false philosophy, infidelity, ignorance, indolence, oppression, persecution, and every false way, with mainly every wrong practice, from the world. *Every plant which my Heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.* This consummation must occur in this world, since in that better country, to which we go, there is no such plant.

Then violence shall never lift the sword,
 Nor cunning justify the proud man's wrong,
 Leaving the poor no remedy but tears.
 Then he that fills an office, shall esteem
 The occasion it presents of doing good

More than the perquisite ; then law shall speak
 Seldom, and never but as wisdom prompts
 And equity ; not jealous more to guard
 A worthless form than to decide aright ;
 Then fashion shall not sanctify abuse,
 Nor smooth good-breeding, supplemental grace,
 With lean performance ape the work of love.

What a blessed transformation of society will be everywhere effected, by the preponderating righteousness of the happy times ! *Righteousness exalteth a nation*, as nothing without it can. In every department of human interest, social individual, what a reformation, what a melioration, what a metamorphosis ; truly *a new creation* of sentiment and character and action ! Think of those monster evils that continue chiliads of time to haunt and mar our social welfare ; and while law, and police, and jails, and gibbets, and military power, and worldly education, and worldly legislation, can never coerce a cure—they will all disappear and vanish from our view. Nothing is wanting but sincere and enlightened faith in the gospel of Christ among all nations, to introduce the millennium and generate the world. The spirit of love to God will diffuse itself of love to man ; the very way for the development of true piety. Hence each will feel an interest in the weal of every other member of the species. The color of the skin will then be the criterion of duties or of rights. Education will be honest, and Christian, and universal, in the main. Men will be every where informed, developed, invigorated, and matured. The only monarchy on earth will be properly a theocracy of God our Savior ; and under him, like Israel before, monarchy was given them in his anger, every state will be a homogeneous and worshipping republic, a commonwealth of Christians. It is probable that a qualified and virtuous democracy, without ambition, usurpation, envy, or military coercion, will generally prevail and endure. Laws shall be few, reasonable, useful, and well administered. Wars shall cease ; slavery be no more ; no duelling, no gambling, no infernal profaneness, no lewd pleasures, no intemperance, no idleness, no calumnious assassination of character, no corrupt merchandising or co

merce, no sectarianism—CHRISTIAN will be all, the brotherhood of human nature will be restored, and physical comforts, it is supposed, will abound. The age of man will be lengthened; disease will be lessened; the productions of the earth will be abundant; marriage will be honored universally as the institution of God; the population of the world will be tenfold, and earth itself will reflect the countenance of heaven. The Lord's day will be every where honored and obeyed. It will be richly enjoyed, appreciated, and blessed. What Christians will those ages produce, when men shall show themselves Christians, and Christians shall show themselves men! How omnipotent will be the truth; no madness left on earth to doubt it! Children will be generally converted early, will grow in grace as they grow in years; and rare will be the mother, the sin of whose son, and perhaps his violent death, will break her heart!¹ What a procession of glorified millions, in those ages, shall crowd the brightened way to the open portals of the realms of glory! What a colony of multitudes, countless and beatified, will earth remit to heaven, fixing there at last the grand majority of the species, the glorious peculium and the proper premium of the Son of God!

Theology will be improved—that is, the truth of revelation, in itself unchangeable, will be more simply and fully studied, more perfectly understood, with more purity inculcated, and with more wisdom used and applied. No impious hypocrite will ever attempt to supersede the truth, or alter it, or modify its heaven-descended unity, or dare to prostitute it as the mere medium of his own vapid self-glory. No elaborate simpleton will ever aim at originality for its own sake, or make it an end instead of a means, in appearing as the exponent or the advocate or the oracle of the truth, vaunting himself to be somebody; and none will be so squalid as to make a party, or even desire *the pre-eminence* among his peers; humility, that signal of wisdom, will then predominate, qualifying all, and

¹ Sometimes with augmented reason, when she neglected or deceived or corrupted his early education, and the consequent remorse is felt.

making demonstration in all, of *simplicity and godly sincerity* not *fleshy wisdom*, by the grace of God, characterizing his ministers and all their works. There will be then no heresy-hunter, no heresy-finder, and no heresy-maker, to disturb the fai of saints and mar the devout peace of the churches of God.

O scenes surpassing fable and yet true ;
 Scenes of accomplished bliss ! which who can see,
 Though but in distant prospect, and not feel
 His soul refreshed with foretaste of the joy ?

With respect to that happy era that is before us, we state-
 1. That they greatly err, in our conviction growing continual stronger, who deny or disparage the truth, that this prospero condition of the church on earth, is to be referred to no oth dispensation of the grace of God, than the present, the Christian dispensation.

Commencing with the mission of the Spirit on the day pentecost, that dispensation, called expressly *the ministration the Spirit*, is to continue to the end of the world. The mille nial glory is only the meridian of its day, not another day. change of dispensation is properly a change of the institut manner, order, and duties, of divine worship on the earth, which the devout conformity of all men is obligated and du Such a change occurred, and shook earth and heaven, *on more*, when the Mosaic was superseded by the Christian dispe sation. But this, in comparison, is not to be shaken or r moved. In it we, and all the elect of God to the end of tim are to be educated for heaven. *Wherefore we, RECEIVING KINGDOM WHICH CANNOT BE MOVED, let us have, let us hold fast or apprehend and firmly grasp, grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear ; for our God is a consuming fire.* It is in this dispensation, to which all previo ones were tributary, that our Lord Jesus Christ, our bless Savior, all accomplished and all accomplishing, is to consummate together his glory and his work. There is no subseque dispensation for the church, except that of eternity and glo in heaven. *He that descended, to the nadir of his humiliatio*

is the same also that ascended to the zenith of his exaltation, culminating for ever, up far above all heavens ; and for what end ? plainly that he might perfectionate his church, and ultimate the success of his cause, and consummate the glory of his eternal enterprise—that he might fill all things, ἵνα πληρώσῃ, that he might fulfil, perform, accomplish all things ; that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, that is, in the Christian dispensation, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him, in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. The idea here, as the chief word, *ανακτεφαλαιώσασθαι*, is plainly military ; that he might reduce under one grand command, or captaincy, or generalissomship, in Christ, all related or congenial elements, celestial and terrestrial, angelic and human, as his great army of light and glory, combined and united for ever in him. Here indeed we have neither time nor place, for extensive argument against opposing theories. Some of them we view as equally specious, and erroneous, and noxious to the interests of the missionary cause. Hence we say of them the four following things ;

1) Their advocates seem to us to interpret Scripture on principles either partial, or puerile, or false.

The plain should govern the doubtful, the lucid control the obscure, the didactic interpret the allegorical, and great known principles rule against those hypothetical and visionary ; general views and analogies well ascertained, taking the lead against those that are private, empirical, and short-witted ; as, with honest and simple-hearted men, it is both custom and nature to do. Instead of this, their plan seems rather the reverse, than the identity, of the right. To interpret the word of God on no principles, or on those mainly conjectural, or certainly mistaken, or plainly false, seems to be the prestige or the preference that besets this class of interpreters—we mean all those who expect or believe **ANOTHER DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD**, ulterior to the Christian, in this world. We condemn them all by this criterion, as very faulty and unsafe, in these great

matters of the kingdom. Compare 1 Cor. 10 : 11. Eph. 1 : 1 22, 23. 4 : 10. Heb. 9 : 26-28. 12 : 26, 27. 1 John 2 : 7, 8, 18

2) Their views, especially some of them, would perfect revolutionize the nature and relations of true religion.

A temporal dynasty, with Christ regnant in human form Jerusalem ; trumpets, bugles, and military music sounding ne his awful pretorium : oriental grandeur, and magnificence, a state, outpeering the glory of Solomon, as it surrounds Sol mon's greater Son and Lord, in the same ancient and holy m tropolis ; the sword puissant, in his realm, more than t pen, the press, or the pulpit ; and Prince Messiah, dashin with his war-club, all his enemies to the earth, papacy, islam idolatry, infidelity, and error ; putting in the fore-front scene of his throne the ocular glare of his omnipotence ; superseding faith by sight, and love by consternation, and hope by absor ing the future into the revelations of the present : with cour less other normal and judaizing inventions or implications their pious day-dreams, show us truly another Gospel, anoth Savior, another kingdom of heaven.

Such views are—to say the least—just as sensuous, qui as unspiritual, about as materializing, and obviously as d similar and inferior, to the appropriate moral glory of the Gpel, revealed from heaven and prehensible by faith, as are t abhorred contrivances and the silly pageantry of puseyism, its sire popery, or even its sire gentilism itself : and these thr we consider as having much of a common origin and characte the best of them as a heathenizing caricature of the Christianity of God ; and there needs another Bible, or possit much more than this, to commend it to our confidence.

For one, I incline not to believe in the restoration of t Jews to the land of their fathers ; but only to their fathe faith and hope and inheritance, by sound conversion to Chri The declarations of the New Testament ought to interpr modify, and control, the figures, the analogies, and the abour ing poetic hyperboles, of the Old. In the New, there exi not a syllable, known to me, that imports mainly any thi more than this—their spiritual conversion to God, and the

exalted usefulness in the manifold influences and ministrations that are to convert the world. They will then read Moses with a correct spiritual intelligence, the veil being removed from their heart. *For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.* They will begin to understand a spiritual *Jerusalem, which is above, which is free, which is the mother of us all.* The visioned apocalypse that charmed the soul of John in Patmos, will by faith be theirs—*I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

According to the usage and the laws of prophecy, the prophets last in the series and nearest to the events predicted, are always the most ample, plain, and particular, in describing them. How is it then that the New Testament tells us so much of the conversion of the Jews, and that *all Israel shall be saved*, and yet never lisps a particle about their restoration to Palestine? And is the Old Testament, comparatively umbra-geous and inferior, to control and reduce the brighter inculcations of the New? the moon, because it rules the night, to supersede the sun, that rules the day and makes the noon? Let the apocrypha comfort the Pope, and the koran regulate the Sultan, and transcendental visions assure the wisdom of infidels, and adorable nonsense entertain and bless the piety of Oxford; as for us, we prefer the Holy Scriptures, soundly interpreted, the new and the last and the most didactic explicating the more ancient, the symbolical, and the comparatively obscure portions, of the divine oracles.

As it is written, There shall come out of Zion the deliverer, AND SHALL TURN AWAY UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB; for THIS IS MY COVENANT TO THEM when I shall take away their sins: nothing here about a voyage to Judea, Samaria, or Galilee, by land or water! nothing about ships, or dromedaries, or the money of Rothschilds, or the patronage of the Czar, or the agency of England, or a temporal messiah! Piety is all—piety, salvation, usefulness!¹

¹ I consider these remarks as necessarily mere sketches and touches of the subject, yet

Some indeed argue differently from the characteristic expectation of the Jews themselves, in all quarters of the world. We entertain, from the same premises, an inference precisely the reverse. What if such be the sentiment of their dismembered nationality ; their darkened singularity, forlorn and scattered, among the nations of the earth, favoring or asserting every where their geographical restoration, their worldly prosperity, their temporal Messiah, their monarchy and imperial state, soon to be re-established, augmented, and enjoyed, them, at Jerusalem ; the entire temple-service also restored with typical atonements, oblations, and sacrifices for sin, what dishonor to the cross of Christ ! to Him who *once offered to bear the sins of many*, and who, **BY ONE OFFERING, HATH PERFECTED FOR EVER THEM THAT ARE SANCTIFIED** ! And we are, on this account, to believe that their expectation is right, if not to favor all the other literalizing theories, anticipating the pre-millennial advent and dominion of the Son of God in person ! It is well enough, so far as consistency goes, for the poor blundering Jews to think as they do. The premises are probably facts, and we have no interest in denying them. But we protest against the reasoning. Have we forgotten that the veil remains on the heart of the Jew ? that his mind blinded, earthly, self-righteous, unspiritual, ignorant, destitute of the faith of Abraham, and at all events, in his gloomy alienation, no oracle for the saints of God ; especially in this eventful age—of revolution, preparation, and transition, toward the millennium ? We more than suspect the grossness of the ungenerate, nay, the very *devices of the devil*, in all such illuminations and theories. The kingdom of God is *not of this world*—*cometh not with observation—is within you—not meat and drink but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*. Its coming and its form are like its nature and its end.

indicative demonstrably of the truth. We find no place here for an extended discussion. There is one passage of many, however, that seems most fully and graphically to show more the post-millennial apostacy for a *little season*, than, immediately on it, the post-millennial advent of the Son of man—Rev. 20 : 11-15—when the resurrection of the dead, the scenery and the awe of eternal judgment, and the final consummation of the *mystery of God*, succeed in order for ever. 1 Thess. 4 : 15-18. Mat. 25 : 31. 32. Acts 1 : 11. 3 : 21.

3) The men who favor the views, in any way, of another dispensation on earth, are, as a class, though with some illustrious exceptions, written in history and reprobated by the wise, I will not say as no Christians—leaving that with God ! but as guides and doctors of the church, though specious possibly, yet, erroneous, or deceptive, or sincere but mythical, or mistaken if not lunatic, or often monstrously ignorant, infatuated, doting, and partisan. From our own times backward, the names of Miller, Joe Smith, Ann Lee, Irving, Swedenborg, Muggleton, Fox, and others, to those of Mohamed, Manichaeus, and Montanus, to add no others, are enough to sicken us with the religious vagaries and absurdities of poor presumptuous, busybodying, and degraded human nature. Their owners were comets, meteors, or ignes fatui in the system. They were mainly corrupters, false lights, perverted men. Their influence is erratic, full of blight and mischief to the hopes of the good. And some moderns of kindred sympathy, proximates of our own times, show a venturous ambition of display, and a low pride of originality, and a vile parade of transcendental learning, against the entire pathology of which the churches need to be solemnly warned. They seem to be candidates of signal promise for a place in the same catalogue—if indeed the improved microscopes of posterity shall be able at all to descry them.

4) The genius and the tendency of all these theorizers, are condemned by this criterion—they are opposed to missions. They have little or no apostolic sympathy with the woes and the wants of lost men. Some indeed are more, some less alienated ; all, either apathetic, or regardless, or exclusive, or fitful, or openly hostile ; at best are they unprincipled, with no consistency of influence, useless, impracticable, on the great topic of the propagation of Christianity : some even *forbidding us to speak to the nations that they might be saved ; to fill up their sins always, for the wrath is come on them to the uttermost.*

That the true religion is revealed from heaven for all mankind ; that it is given expressly with the order, *preach it in all the world, to every creature* ; that the profound doctrines of

revelation can never conflict with its plain duties, but only favor them ; that God sincerely desires us to do our duty ; that people are to display, reflect, and carry out, the purposes of his wonderful philanthropy, sympathizing and corresponding with it in all its full-orbed perfection and glory ; that all subjects of God, who have it, are bound to communicate infinite good to others ; that for their omissions here they slender an account ; that all men supremely need it ; that secularity is no apology, but only itself a sin ; that sloth, covousness, impiety, the policy of hell, and nothing better, are combined to oppose it ; that love to God and man necessarily prompts us to diffuse *the glorious gospel of the blessed God* ; that there is no way of salvation in the world but this ; that if Christendom would do its duty here, all the world would soon be Christendom ; that our duty is plain, and high, and always substance the same ; that the dense insensibility of men, often even of the good, in this regard, is only an affecting proof of that moral torpor which human depravity alone explains ; that the reflex influence of missions, on domestic interest, personal character, on national sentiment, as well as on national renown throughout the world, making us more the model nation as well as the great republic, in the estimation of all other nations, and worthier far as the example of others—that such influence, though not alone, and rather incidental than prima facie in our great enterprise, is itself more than an ample compensation for all we do to impart the boon to others ; that still the work, in its object, and its direct action to obtain it, is honorable and glorious, and elevated in its own nature, above all comparison in human pursuits, profitable to souls, a glory to the country, beneficent to the whole species, honorable to God, enriching to the very revenues of heaven, and multiplying the glorious monuments to all eternity ; that devout men are agreed in the great principles of the missionary enterprise, give the gospel to all the world ; that Universalists and other professional deceivers, with all other heretics and infidels and semi-Christians, have no *bowels of mercies*, such as the apostle of Christ exemplified, in spreading the gospel incessantly.

through the whole world, in the first age of its career : these, and other considerations like them, determine our estimate of all the theories, and all the theorizers, in the world, who care practically little or nothing for communicating the pure light of salvation to all mankind. It is crime !

2. We are now prepared for another statement—that God uses human agency in the work, has done so from the beginning, will do so to the end. What says so instructively our text ? Oh ! how grand what it predicts ! and the way of it is given in epitome, yet with rigid verity and history. The sway of the world **SHALL BE GIVEN TO THE PEOPLE** of *the saints of the Most High*. And again, *until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom*. Here the popular element is specified as well as the saintly. This is glory ; and all things are now in motion, and alive in tendency, overruled sublimely, to effectuate it. Tyrants in church and state, usurpers and selfish oppressors of all sorts, are every where weakened, falling, discredited, and resorting desperately to money, to confederation, to feudal subterfuge, to factitious theories of power, to passion and violence and arms, to save their usurpations, and crush the duties and the rights of man—crushing morally as well, the claims, the sanctions, and the prerogatives of God. But their time is short. Their rage is weak, their wrath is vain, their end is near. God is against them, and he will prevail. Ezek. 21 : 26. 27. How does our text dispose of them ! How does his providence proceed to fulfil it, before our eyes, as it is at this day ! God actuates the reformers of nations, in spite of selfish conservatives, who love their old and profitable monopolies of privilege, precedence, and power. *The people* act, they advance, they toil, and they prevail. The dominion is given to them, and they take it. The grant is made to them, and they conquer and occupy it. This more than implies their used and subsidized agency. Their title is good and their sway legitimate. They hold of God himself. He gives to them the kingdom, the jurisdiction of the earth ; as he never gave it to Alexander, or any other of the barbarian

beasts of human prowess and usurpation and blood. God ins
rits and employs his own people. He makes them wise a
guides their prospered way. He warms their hearts with
love of Christ. He is their counsellor and their patron a
their leader in all. He gave Canaan of old to the tribes, in
manner symbolical of the maturer and grander conquests of
people : and they took it, subdued it, achieved it. And
under him, they fulfilled his purpose, illustrated his plan, occ
pied the country, and thanked Him for all their victories a
all their possessions and all their enjoyments.

3. We ought to view this as a great honor and privilege,
be co-workers with God in such a cause. We actually wo
with God, and for God, and in God, and to the glory of Ge
in the salvation of men. What an occupation of moral ma
nificence, what an object of elevation and excellence ! It
indeed supreme. We correspond with God, coincide with
designs, enjoy his triumphs, find in him all our resources, a
from him expect, through great and wonderful grace, all o
reward. This is honor—or there is none in the univer
Earth, thy rivalries die, thy bubbles burst, here.

Thus the men
Whom God's own work can charm, with God himself
Hold converse; grow familiar day by day
With his conceptions, act upon his plan,
And form to his the relish of their souls.

4. The work is to be accomplished by means, not miracle
not fate, not chance, not angelic ministries, not superhuman &
exclusively. While we are restricted in the use of means,
those appointed for us, we rejoice to know, that not so restrict
is the Chief Agent in the glorious operation. God is ruler amo
the nations, Were it not so, we could have no solace or me
tal anchorage in such a perilous system—we should more dre
than enjoy or endure, existence ! But *the Lord God Omnipot
reigneth—ALLELUIA !* He arbitrates all events ; and in soi
way uses, economizes, manages all, overruling all things in t
end for the best good of his own cause and the richest blesse
ness of being. God can use means multitudinous and many

lous and tremendous, that we cannot use, that we know not, that we may not anticipate, or limit, or imagine. But

5. We must see to it that *the gospel of the kingdom is preached among all nations.*

And here, my brethren, if I mistake not, we have a mission august and peculiar. Under God, we are the very ones to do this work. We know what the gospel is, and we can illustrate, prove, and enforce what we know. We have comparatively none of the corrupt papal elements, unwieldy and incredible, puerile and odious, in our polity, our service, or our creed. God has taught us *a more excellent way*, than hierarchy or its sympathizers ever knew; or knowing, than they could communicate to the nations. Their organizations, the accretions of ages, eminently human, eminently secular, eminently Romanizing, are also cumbrous, complicated, impracticable: worse than the armor of Saul, compared with the sling of David and *the five smooth stones chosen out of the brook*. God has his reasons for using them in other spheres and relations. If we are to wait till their efficiency illustrates the accomplishment of our text, we may well repress all our anticipations, and recast our chronology of the millennium, with a postponement quite as indefinite as the evidence of their apostolical title or their commission in monopoly. Enough that God condescends to use us to give the unsophisticated gospel to the world; the genuine gospel, the real apostolical gospel, the gospel primitive, eternal and divine; religiously abhorring the wicked quackery that dares to modify it. We diffuse it *as it is in Jesus*; and in the genuine apostolic way of. pilgrims, puritans, protestants; thanking no man—no, nor *an angel from heaven*, who attempts to alter, under the vain and impious notion, implied though not expressed, of improving it! We give it, as He gave it to us, incorrupt, simple, pure, and full; with no desire, thought, or endurance, of altering the revelation of God; and without all the massive appendages and inventions of human wisdom, and patristical authority, disfiguring its glory, alienating its symmetry, and destroying its divine virtue, *the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth.*

The apostles were twelve,¹ and as such, had no successors; as neither had their adorable Master! their respective usurping rivals, prelates and popes, to the contrary notwithstanding, in their truthless dreams daring to style themselves those the apostles of Christ, these each the vicar of the Son God; all with kindred blindness, selfishness, and criminal delusion. These forgeries against heaven and earth are capital treasons in the universe, and every minister of God is official and solemnly bound to expose and denounce them with indignation. Such heathen imaginings were not stereotype or made canonical, or even known, in the genuine apostol age, when *the signs² of an apostle* were defined and exacte with impartiality and truth; and previous to those predict ages of vafrous degeneracy and usurpation and traditio when the whole of hell's masterpiece was in succession deve oped. What knew the primitive church of the pride-invented ecclesiastical pyramid, with its manifold orders of the clerg

¹ The place of Judas was divinely and miraculously and astoundingly supplied, by invocation of Saul of Tarsus, consecrated, as every true apostle was, by our Lord Jesus Christ himself. Matthias was no apostle, though at first, and for a very little time, and very improperly, *numbered among the apostles*. It was done on the motion of Peter, before the day of Pentecost, with no shadow of command from God, and in violation of the order to wait ~~expecting~~—for the baptism of the Spirit; before the time of which their autonomy proceeded. Afterward, we never hear a word of this factitious apostle, either in Scripture or history. No monument commemorates his usefulness or records the place of his ministry. His name is found in none of the diptichs—no church is named after him—and his apostol seems to have ended in smoke as it began. His piety we do not impeach. He may be in heaven; but the record of his office, we regard as a mere matter historically narrated, with no sanction of the fact, and which the subsequent history of Paul magnificently and contrast illustrates.

² To be able as an eye-witness to attest to the nations the resurrection of Christ, one of the grand facts of the gospel; to possess the gifts of inspiration and miraculous working; to proceed IMMEDIATELY from Christ as the bearer of his messages to men; these used to be chief among the signs indispensably required by the churches of the first age, and by which they made impostors uncomfortable. 2 Cor. 11: 11-15. 1 Cor. 1: 8-15. 9: 1. 2. Rev. 2: 2. 21: 14. Eph. 2: 19. 20. We are not to receive those apostolic successors, in this day, who possess NOT ONE SINGLE QUALIFICATION, that would accredit them, for a moment, in the first century—to say nothing of qualifications of ordinary character. All men of real eminence in this and other countries scout the idea with Chalmers, who, in a letter to the writer, styles it, THE UTTER FOLLY OF APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION. Let Christians in America be consistent, enlightened, and brave, for truth! Error is not good enough for them or their children.

from its base upward to **THE MAN OF SIN** enthroned on its apex ? What knew they of sectarian exclusiveness, under the cloak of catholic government, despising vital piety ? What of worship all factitious and mechanical, repetitious and responsive, liturgical and formal ; what of papal supremacy, or seven sacraments, or a *sine-qua-non* sanction from Cæsar, to give, by act of parliament, to another nation and another hemisphere, the right to have, or to be, a church of the living God ? Let us cease, my brethren, **NEVER**, to maintain the eternal right, against all false assumptions and pragmatalical impudence of the sort, whether papal or pseudo-protestant, either as vexing our missionary usefulness abroad, or as questioning our legitimacy at home, in this noble and goodly land of protestant freedom ! Let us not fear to assert our Christian liberty, glorying in the divine simplicity of the gospel. Let us *stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.* We may not be too polite in prostration to any of their idols, however fashionable, however wondered after, or patronized, or worshipped, by the unthinking and conforming throng. The time is come when principles of truth should be avowed without fear, favor, or fawning ; without declining any proper responsibility, asleep unseasonably¹ so near *the battle of that great day of God Almighty !* and without all courteous compliances with what we know to be religionizing fustian, false and execrable in the sight of God. It is indeed so despicable and so driveling, intellectually, that I should not think it worthy of notice on this occasion, but for its recent revival, its deceitful alliance with the depravity of men, its pompous arts and seductive pretensions, its assumptions in high places, as the great error of the age. Let us meet our duty here like martyrs, and do it, living or dying, valiant for the truth. So did our sainted fathers, the abused and persecuted puritans of England, the philosophers of heaven, the invincible believers of the truth, the only enlightened friends and champions of civil and religious lib-

¹ Rev. 16: 15.

erty then on earth, the immortal and blessed benefactors of man nature, the elite of Christendom, and—with all due allowance for their confessed imperfections, the genuine ancestors and authors, under God, of our own precious American freedom. So did they—or we should not now be enjoying, with God's benediction for its continuance, the large reward of their sufferings, their toils, their reformations, and their testimonies.

It was not popery, neither was it any of its kindred, that made the glorious civil and religious liberty of our country. Statesmen, philosophers, Americans, know ye how rightly to solve this problem of grandeur as well as wonder? What was the plastic element, the formative cause, of the stupendous and unique result, now witnessed and envied by mankind? Tell me—only you must tell you. It was not the consequence or the product of Laudean prelacy, that of the seventeenth century or that of the nineteenth. That leaven of abominations never made a state or a people better; never made them free, holy, a happy; never will and never can! The stream—rises it high than its fountain? The fruit—is it good, growing on a corrupt tree? Its offspring—are they better than the stock on which they grew, or the root from which they shot? No! O blessed freedom, blood-bought in more senses than one, from heaven for its source, the gospel for its medium, the reformation for its atmosphere, salvation for its crown, and for author and dispenser God alone! It was the influence of the puritan's Bible, it was the fruit of Christianity. Yes! this is the incomparable engine of civilization, the grandest and the best inspirer of rational freedom, that the world ever saw or will see. It is wholly without a peer as the grand inspirer of the warrant, and the director, of all good and needed REFORMATIONS through all the world. There is absolutely no other. It is the only antidote, the supreme catholicon, for the misery of man; without one particle of quackery, or empiricism, priest-craft, or king-craft, or any other craft, in its total completeness. And what made our liberties in church and state that alone can preserve them; that alone can realize them for others—to the serfs of oppression, the myrmidons of tyrann

the uncounted millions of moral and political slavery, in Europe and the world.

What changes has God made favorable to our success, since the commencement of our missionary enterprise ! Then our range was comparatively straitened, our prospect limited and tenebrous. Our present retrospect of forty years is full of wonderful providences, all of progress and improvement. Now the whole world is open to us. God has done it, and he will show us greater things than these, that ye may marvel. We are encouraged in the work, and commanded to go forward. The pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night, moves visible before us ; and wo to us, if we hesitate, each in his place, to follow where that sacred symbol leads us. To furnish the Holy Scriptures to every nation in their own language ; to discover to them the love of Christ, in that language of kindness, which needs no translation, but is intelligible every where without it ; to educate their children, and forestall the minds of infancy, in the knowledge of the truth ; to visit the antipodes, and explore the islands of the sea, aiming, in humble imitation of our Savior's mission, *to seek and to save that which was lost* ; to make many a circumnavigation of benevolence, and many a pains-taking visitation of philanthropy ; to find the places where truth may radiate with most advantage, and occupy them ; to be wise and zealous in the cause, to be vigilant, exemplary, and constant, in the grand operations of the kingdom, marshalling the whole field of usefulness : this we propose to do, and this we will do, more and more, if the Lord will that we live and do it : to Him be all the glory for ever !

In the general economics of the missionary work, there is much, no doubt, in the way of practical wisdom, for us and our co-laborers to learn. It was to be expected, and could not in so vast a matter be otherwise. We hope to learn by experience, more and more, correcting former mistakes, supplying previous defects, and managing all with a view to every real improvement.

We will also endeavor to allure our countrymen, one and all, to help us, and bless themselves, united with us, in this

magnificent and protestant crusade—not of war and chivalry and superstition, but of wisdom and truth and communicating goodness. We know indeed all their objections, and several others. We have gauged the dimensions of their greatness, and weighed the essential quantum of their gravity; trusting in the Spirit of God to sway their spirits to better ends and aims. Some objections seeming of considerable respectability, which the million never think, are more powerful in the old hemisphere and in the infernal world; tyrants every where hate the cause of missions, supported by the policy of popery and the unanimous suffrage of *the devil and his angels*. But what care we, practically, for objections, made by ignorance and selfishness, and all manner of blind impiety? The cause of God will prevail without them, and with them, and against them; and eternity will teach those who learn it not sooner that this business of objection-pling at the cause of God, is about as unprofitable, as it is without hope, and without the patronage of heaven. And in this we are neither superfluous nor extravagant. Nay, our text rebukes all hostile imagining with all low conceptions; and calls for an enlarged, as well as an enlightened, appreciation of what is before us. When, in the last place, we contemplate

V THE POWER OF THIS DIVINE ASSURANCE TO ENCOURAGE AND SUSTAIN US, BY FAITH IN ITS TRUTH;

us, and especially our beloved missionary brethren now in the field, prosecuting our common object, the propagation of Christianity and its ascendancy universal in the world.

The inspiration of authentic hope is incomparable. It exhilarates the soul. Its whisper is more than the presence of an angel. It is availed sublimely of the supremacy of God. It anticipates victory as the crown of the engagement, and enjoys it as the courage of the war. It triumphs in God and honors him.

On the other hand, say what you will, and in what be-
way you can, about absolute excellence, and right, and obliga-

tion, and glory, it is not in human nature, in any state, to do much under the nurture of despondency. Despair never made a Christian, a scholar, or a hero: never a Paul, or a Wiclif, or a Columbus, or a Luther, or a Washington. Never will it endure, or prosper, or answer, as the motive influence in the cause of missions. Look at the founder of missions and the prince of missionaries, *who for THE JOY THAT WAS SET BEFORE HIM, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* We need, my brethren, the animation of hope; we need it as a rich and a permanent influence. Hence our hope in such a work must be better than poetry, more substantive than rainbows; it must repose, serene and invincible, on the adamantine basis of *truth and soberness.* We must culture it appropriately, with glowing conviction and the bravery of faith in God; wonted to its perpetual and steady impulse, as well as its illuminated atmosphere, its day and its heaven. Suppose for a moment its absence, its torpidity, its fitful vacillation; where then find we the accomplishing, the patient, the vigorous action demanded in our cause?

Suppose we could view that cause as wholly uncertain in its issue, the obstacles so formidable, the odds against us, and our enemies too many for us; should we in fact continue to prosecute it? or, *faint in the day of adversity?*

Suppose we felt, in the languor of our faith, that we were left alone in the contest, without God to help us.

Suppose we could doubt in reference to our mighty, our eternal, our divine Leader, *the captain of our salvation bringing many sons to glory;* doubt his ability or power to carry the enterprise, or his wisdom and skill so *wonderful in counsel, so excellent in working;* or his purpose sublime, his fiat passed and published for its success; or his own engagedness, self-commitment, and public pledges, in earth and in heaven, in time and in eternity, to men and to angels, that this is the cause, the only one, that shall endure, and advance, and prevail for ever; and that *the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of*

the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

Aye ! but doubting what God hath said, is no part of our religion : rather is believing the way in which the whole of it is generated, nourished, developed, and matured. Faith in God is the parent of hope, as the truth of God is the parent of faith.

Let us then suppose, once more, that our confidence in God were what it ought to be, filial, entire, cordial, as well as enlightened, firm, and happy ; as it may well be, by doing only a little justice to the veracity of God, to his statements of wonder and instruction, to his revealed purposes and prophecies of truth, which his own providences will soon be revealed to accomplish ; should we then be dwindling and dwarfing our plans and our efforts in his service ? should we not feel the unchangeable inspiration of the sentiment, that success is sure ? *And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, even of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.* Courage then, brethren, courage in the work ! Feel only, by truly believing, what God authorizes, asserts, and means, in the text, and you will lack no encouragement. Your own piety, and maturity for heaven, will be advanced by it. Your own zeal will gain strength by exercise, while you know that *the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.* You will enjoy while you labor, and your own reward will be augmented before you go to it. You will endure, increase, and prevail. You will find it profitable, pleasant, and practicable, as well as great, and honorable, and glorious. It is the harvest of the world, in which *he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit to life eternal.* Therefore, *my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord ; forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the LORD.* Amen.



REV. DR. STORRS'S SERMON

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR
FOREIGN MISSIONS,

PREACHED AT OSWEGO, NEW YORK, SEPT. 10, 1850.



ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN THE WORK OF THE LORD.

(14)

A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT OSWEGO, NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 10, 1850,

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR

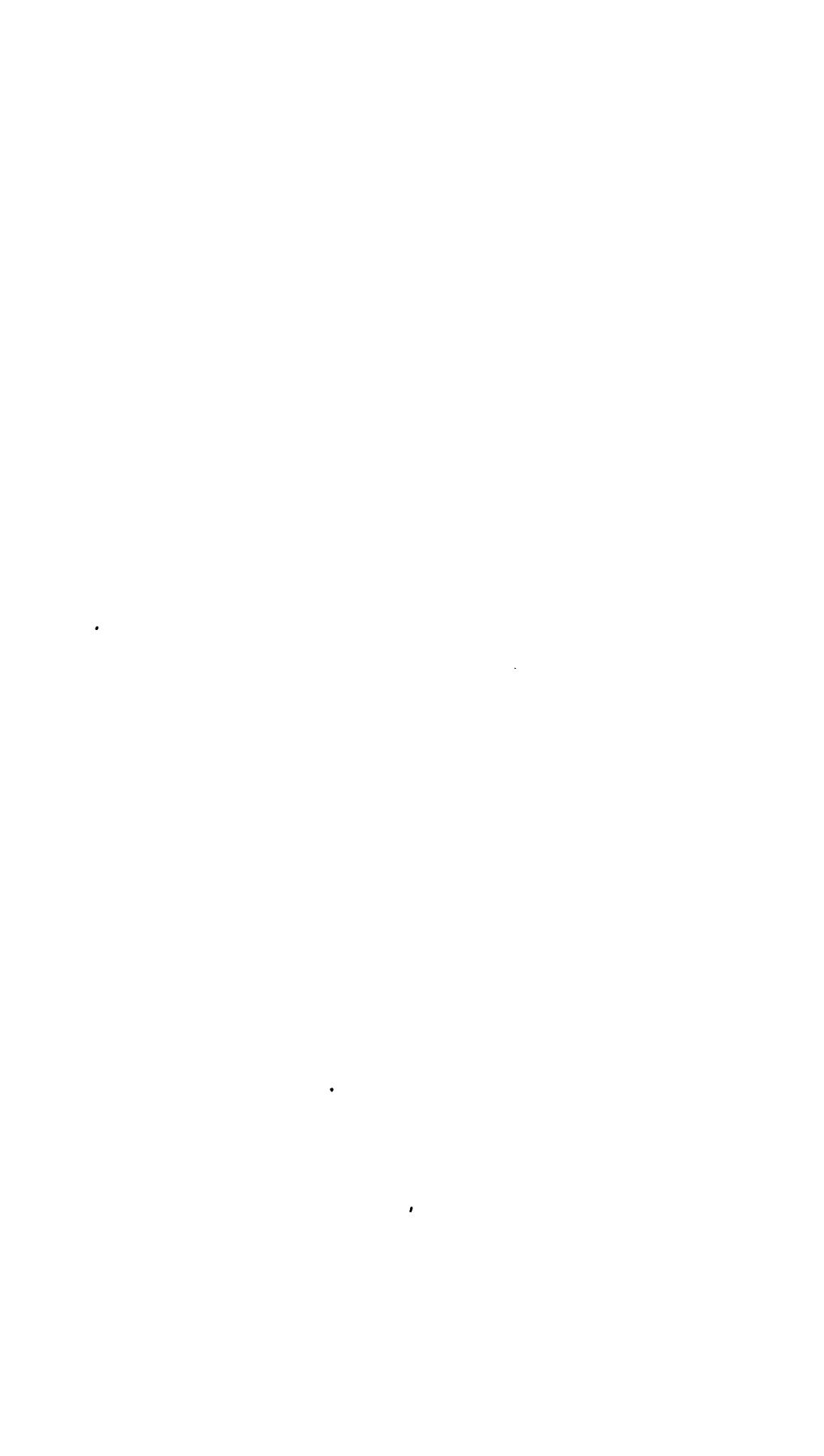
FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AT THEIR

FORTY-FIRST ANNUAL MEETING.

BY RICHARD S. STORRS, D. D.,
BRAINTREE, MS.

BOSTON:
PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN, 24 CONGRESS STREET.
1850.



S E R M O N.

No apology, I am sure, will be required, for the selection of the words which closed so appropriately and eloquently, the able discourse delivered at your last annual convocation, as the theme of our present meditations ; they are recorded in

1 CORINTHIANS, xiv. 58.

THEFORE, MY BELOVED BRETHREN, BE YE STEDFAST, UNMOVEABLE, ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN THE WORK OF THE LORD, FORASMUCH AS YE KNOW THAT YOUR LABOR IS NOT IN VAIN IN THE LORD.

THE eye of the Apostle is directed to the future resurrection of the righteous. Rapt in wonder and joy in contemplation of the grace that gives victory to the believer over death and hell, and filled with grateful emotion in view of so signal a triumph, he is unable to repress the awakened sensibilities, which burst forth in this strong language, at once admonishing to faithfulness in duty, and supplying encouragement the most animating and ample.

We indeed look not onward, at this hour, to the final resurrection of the dead, at the sounding of the archangel's trumpet, so much as to the interven-

ing moral resurrection of the nations to new life and activity in the service of God—a resurrection to be effected by humbler instrumentalities, and with far less observation, than those by which the great designs of mercy and of wrath toward this fallen race shall be consummated ; both of these resurrections, however, are inseparably connected in the mighty chain of divine purposes circling earth and heaven, binding God to man and man to God, for the brightest display of the Ineffable Glory. We take no part in the recovery of the world to Christ, that bears not directly on the manifestations of eternal wisdom, holiness and love, in “that great day for which all other days are made ;” not a savage of our Western wilds, nor a Hottentot or Hindoo of distant lands, shall be brought to the knowledge of the truth, without adding to the joyfulness of the hour when death shall be swallowed up in victory.

The words before us suggest three distinct but closely connected topics, deserving our consideration.

I. The duty of the church to be “always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

II. The difficulties to be met, and only overcome by perseverance in this work—“be ye steadfast and unmoveable.”

III. The promised reward—“your labor shall not be in vain in the Lord.”

I. The duty of the church—to be “always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

1. The nature of the work demands it.

To reconcile man to God, through the enlightenment of his mind and the renovation of his heart, though more than can be accomplished “ by might or by power,” is the work committed to human hands, moved and guided by the Holy One. No audible voice from heaven calls forth the man dead in trespasses and sins to spiritual life and action, nor does the lone arm of Omnipotence raise him from the depths into which he has fallen, and “ put him among the children ;” but the voice of his fellow man arrests and instructs him, and the hand of his brother gently leads him from the precipice overhanging the world of death, and conducts him to Jesus’ feet. Feeble instrumentality this, it is admitted ;—but, ordained of heaven, it is no less necessary to the soul’s salvation, than the energy of the wonder-working Spirit himself.

And, the field of labor is broad. Man’s enmity to God is at once entire and universal. Its developments indeed, are affected by circumstances of time, place, education and social condition ; but whether it assume the robes of an angel of light, or the blood-dyed garments of the veteran warrior—whether it slay indiscriminately the children of Bethlehem, or repeat prayers on the house-top—whether it offer superstitious devotions at Jerusalem or Mecca, at Rome or Benares, or exonerate itself of every religious obligation, its vital character is still the same ; it is determined and proud rebellion against the authority of the Most High—claiming that

“ All is not lost ; the unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield
And what is else not to be overcome ;
That glory, never shall his wrath or might
Extort from me.”

The world is cursed by Satan’s rule, and lieth in wickedness. As is the master, so is the servant. The whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now ; nor will it be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, till the church shall more and more abound in the work of the Lord.

2. God’s purpose in the establishment of the church evinces it.

The church has a name and constitution, ordinances and modes of worship, that determine by their simplicity and variety the great end of her existence. God has formed her to reflect his image, vindicate his honor, extend his authority, and enforce his claims ; and for this, he has clothed her with his own beauty, breathing into her a measure of his Spirit, and requiring of her an homage involving the cheerful sacrifice of all earthly good on the altars of truth and holiness. She is the pillar and ground of the truth, the salt of the earth, the light of the world. She has one master, even Christ ; and to her are given the keys of the kingdom of heaven, that the souls of men may be loosed or bound, as her faithfulness or negligence shall decide.

Not for the edification and comfort of members gathered into her bosom without efforts of her own,

and still less, for the accumulation of worthless honors and emoluments upon herself, has she been called into being ; but that she may proclaim in every land Jehovah's name, and summon all nations to the obedience of the faith. By opening the eyes of the blind, unstopping the ears of the deaf, and causing the tongue of the dumb to sing, she is to become "an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations."

Such was God's beneficent purpose in her establishment ;—not that she might conceal the lively Oracles, and substitute for them the traditions of men ; not that she might fill the world with lying wonders, plant the gold-garnished cross upon the hill-top and surmount it with a crown of thorns ; not that she might parade her armed battalions and pour forth volleys of thunder in honor of an idol ; not that she might invent new terms of salvation, and grant indulgences and remission of sins for the vain repetition of prayers and the payment of money ; nor that she might decree arbitrary modes of worship, and compel men by menace and torture, or allure them by flattery and falsehood to adopt a humanly contrived system of faith and practice, violative both of reason and revelation—but, that she might maintain "the law and testimony" in their integrity, explain and enforce their teachings, exemplify their spirit and diffuse their life-giving influence, instructing all men in the first principles and subordinate details of duty, by the energetic ministration of God's word and ordinances, the maintenance of seminaries of science, the operations of the press, and whatever other instrumentalities bear

on them the imprimatur of Heaven. For these ends, and for these alone, was the church established by him who made the world and marshaled the hosts of heaven ; and for the same ends she is still sustained in her conflict with the powers of earth and hell.

3. The commission given by Christ to the first disciples contemplates it.

“ Go ye therefore and teach all nations — all things whatsoever I have commanded you ; and lo ! I am with you always, even to the end of the world.” Paramount is the authority that issues this command, plain the duty it enjoins, and full of grace the promise that attends it. “ Beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things ; ” and while they bear witness to the truth—“ a mouth and wisdom are given them, which all their adversaries are neither able to gainsay nor to resist.”

But the work of the Apostles and their successors in office, turning men from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, belongs equally to the entire body of the church in all generations. Christ’s ministers are but the heaven-appointed leaders of

“ The sacramental host of God’s elect ” —

ordained heralds of the great salvation embodied in the visible church ; nor are the labors and self-denials involved in the execution of this high commission more exclusively theirs, than are the honor and happiness of the promised results. The com-

mission is thrown into the hands and bound upon the conscience of every Christian, clothing him with authority, either personally or by substitution, to evangelize all nations, instructing him to be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, making his light to shine widely as the world, that through his works of faith and labors of love, he may glorify his Father in heaven, and save his fellow men from everlasting death. The humblest believer, faithful to this high trust, will share the glories, as he shares the faith and sacrifices of the most eminent among God's servants.

4. The spirit of piety prompts it.

Religion in its nature is communicative. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." The peace and joy brought home to the individual, are only perfected when imparted to others. The new born child of grace cannot rest, till the full tide of his sanctified emotions has broken over every embankment and flowed freely into other bosoms ; awaked to the long neglected glories of the spiritual world, he pants to make them known to as many as are still enveloped in darkness ; and the first aspiration of his renovated spirit is, "Lord ! what wilt thou have me to do ?" As the great revival of 1740 gave birth to the concert of prayer for the conversion of the world, so that concert of prayer called up the question whether the active labors of the church could not be successfully combined for the same end ; and the earnest consideration of this question led to the conviction, that duty demanded immediate and united effort ; and this conviction

resulted in the resolution on which we act to-day—to “publish salvation to the ends of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thy God reigneth.”

Whoever has first learned “the exceeding sinfulness of sin,” and the bitterness of its fruits, and then has participated in the spirit that would have all men to be saved, is constrained by every principle of his regenerated nature, to abound more and more in labors of love for those destined to an immortality of weal or wo, and now lying under condemnation. A Christian, indifferent to the actual or prospective miseries of his fellow men, is a solecism in terms. The eye that has been turned from earth to heaven, the heart that has leaped for joy at emancipation from sin’s thraldom, and has bathed itself in the light of heaven, can never regard indifferently the darkness and wo that hang over unregenerated man in his various earthly conditions, but loving his neighbor as himself, and knowing the grace of the Lord Jesus, that “though he was rich yet for our sakes he became poor, that we, through his poverty might be rich,” he will be ready to every sacrifice for the salvation of his “neighbor,” though dwelling at the ends of the earth. “Lord, save!” is the spontaneous cry of the renovated spirit, oppressed like Paul with great heaviness, in view of the world’s woes; and then is the injunction cheerfully obeyed, “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.”

5. The providence of God encourages it.

Faith recognizes the movements of the wonder-working God in the progressive discoveries of the

past three hundred years, throwing open to the eye new continents, and isles of the sea before unknown, all thickly tenanted by undying man. The bold daring of Columbus and the Duke of Visco, the intrepidity of Vasco de Gama, Cooke, Drake, and others, who first made Christendom acquainted with America, and Africa, and the Eastern Archipelago, sprang from the counsels of the only wise God, as directly as the kingly spirit of the son of Kish, and the dauntless courage of Chaldea's monarch. Through long ages had darkness covered the earth, streaked only here and there with a ray of lurid light, struck up by the collision of religious fanaticism with the spirit of conquest and blood-thirstiness ; and then, science had well nigh closed its eyes on the phenomena of nature ; philosophy dozily dreamed within the precincts of the monastery, of the arcana to be brought to light from the fields of intellect ; and contentedly followed the beaten track of by-gone ages ; and zeal for God and human improvement slept quietly in the bosom of superstition—till suddenly, fire fell from heaven upon the castellated folly and ignorance of man's heart, and the winds of heaven drove him forth

“ From the castle height of indolence, and its false luxury,”

into the broad area of a then unknown world, in pursuit of wealth and fame, under the banners of him, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, but still under the invisible guidance of another, “ in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

And the same Providence now opens the ears of men, in nearly every quarter of the globe, to the message of salvation—whether through the extending sway of Christian governments, or the widely diffused conviction of the intellectual and moral superiority of evangelized nations, or the influence of prospective commercial gain, or the manifest uselessness, and foreshadowed extinguishment of Pagan and Mohammedan religious systems, it matters not ; the fact is undeniable, and replete with encouragement.

To the same Providence must be ascribed the spirit now abroad, which aims at the translation of the Scriptures into all languages, and their universal distribution ; the raising up of preachers of righteousness from among the heathen, and that education of the masses of idolaters, which shakes their confidence in the false religions of their fathers, and constrains them to seek a better way for themselves and their little ones. Gratefully should we recognize the hand that has brought into action these fitting instrumentalities for effecting the purposes of God's mercy toward the Pagan world.

Nor can we overlook the same Providence that to some extent has already supplanted idolatry,—that has thrown to the winds wild and inveterate delusions,—that has annihilated cruel and disgusting customs of long continuance,—that has here and there enlightened the dark mind, subdued the stubborn will, and caused the pouring of the heart's best treasures into the bosom of Infinite Love. The Greek and the Armenian, the Papist and the Jew, the shivering

Greenlander, and the glowing West-Indian, the red man of America, and the Sandwich Islander, the servile Karen, and the fierce Malay, the ebon child of Africa, and the boasting denizen of the “Celestial Empire,” have alike, in numbers few indeed, found their way to the feet of Jesus, giving us fair promise of the triumphs of grace in future but not far distant years. Hitherto, great things have been rarely expected, and still more rarely attempted ; but, even now, the evidence is clear, that before men call, God answers, and while they are yet speaking he hears, and is ready to follow with the demonstration of his Spirit, each hallowed effort that shall be put forth for the world’s conversion. I might add

6. The promises of God assure it.

These promises, however, will claim our attention more particularly hereafter, when we consider the reward of “abounding in the work of the Lord.”

I proceed, therefore, to the second topic suggested by the text for our consideration, viz.

II. The difficulties to be met, and only overcome by perseverance in this work.

That formidable difficulties lie in the way of duty is clearly implied in the injunction, “be steadfast, and unmoveable.” This language is too simple to need exposition, and nothing can add to its forcefulness. Yet its purport will best be understood, and its earnestness justified to the mind that sympathizes with God, if we particularize some of these difficulties.

1. An obvious difficulty arises from the confessed obliquities of believers themselves.

History and experience prove an unceasing conflict between the law of the mind, and the law in the members. Sin stamps its gloomy features in various depth of shade on the Christian, impairing his strength, diminishing his courage, creating distrust of God, and cherishing a quiet apathy to human wants and woes. Through its mighty force, earth's fascinations blind the eye to the attractiveness of God's service ; the cares of life oppress, the deceitfulness of riches betrays, the pomps of the world beguile, and the misanthropy of the multitude disheartens him,—till he exclaims, “ O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death.” If his heart sometimes awakes, yet through physical infirmity his affections soon languish ; if holy resolutions are formed in his happier moments, yet the anxieties attendant on earthly relationships drive them back into forgetfulness ; if sentiments of fraternal confidence are religiously cherished toward the faithful in Christ Jesus, yet they are often nullified by the suspicions and jealousies engendered in the womb of denominational distinction ; if purposes of self-consecration to Christ and the church are solemnly formed, yet they do not preclude prejudice and contention or insignificant questions of policy, as strong as that which arose between Paul and Barnabas. And surely, when the friends of Christ cease to pray and labor together, through the influence of discordant views on the subject of rites and ceremonies,—when they

tithe the mint, the annise, and the cummin, and neglect the cultivation of faith, hope and charity, the weightier matters of the law, they betray an obliquity of heart or judgment, which creates a formidable difficulty to the progress of truth to its final triumph. And yet, the difficulty is of wide extent throughout the Christian world, prevailing proportionably as the elements of corruption within remain unsubdued, and the love of ease, or thirst for accumulation, or aspirations for distinction, or pride of opinion, or obstinacy of prejudice, or narrowness of vision, triumph over the meek and self-denying spirit of Christ.

2. Another difficulty presents itself, in the deep debasement of those, whose spiritual benefit is contemplated.

Ignorant of God and his law, as well as of their own, and the moral character of the world,—content with mental inactivity, and indifferent to moral elevation,—untaught in the principles of science, and fast bound in errors venerated for their antiquity,—vicious in their habits, and absorbed in sensual indulgences,—accustomed to the profane rites of religions glittering yet grovelling, and degrading yet commanding and terrible,—they are unprepared to listen to the annunciation of Glory to God in the highest, and to appreciate the Gospel, as proclaiming deliverance from the dominion of sin and death. They are strange things which are thus brought to their ears by men of other lands and a purer faith, claiming the authority of that unknown God,—

“From whom departing, they are lost, and rove
At random, without honor, hope or peace ;”

and often their thoughts are not to be turned by any amount of testimony or argument from their deep-worn channels, nor their affections diverted from objects of their earliest and devoutest worship. The stupidity of the Hottentot, the sensuality of the Hindoo, the prejudice of the Mohammedan, the ancestral pride of the self-styled "Son of heaven," and the sottishness of the South-Sea Islander, alike interpose a wall high as heaven between the Christian teacher and the child of ignorance—a wall that shall one day sink like the battlements of Jericho at God's presence, but can never be overthrown by combinations of human skill and power alone.

It is too late in the day to indulge the fancies of some good men even—that by the sound of the hammer and the saw, pagans may be allured to sit patiently under the shade of their bread-fruit trees, and listen to the tidings of salvation ;—that their religious prejudices so much run in the current of divine revelation, as to predispose them to receive the humbling doctrines of the Gospel ;—that from the king on the throne to the infant of a year old, they are ready to throng Christian schools, and attend the worship of Jehovah ;—and that their generosity to each other, their bounty and liberality to strangers, their care of their children, their filial reverence, their honesty and fidelity, their truthfulness and tender mercies, are unequalled. Such dreams have been indulged, with a confidence due only to holy verities, in regard to some heathen tribes if not all,—I hardly need say, to the mortification of the dreamers, and the disappointment of Zion's too san-

guine friends. But Paul has described the heathen every-where, not more graphically than truthfully. He deals not in fiction, when he portrays them as vain in their imaginations, given up to uncleanness, worshiping the creature more than the Creator, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, and malignity. Long and sad experience declares that infernal passions dwell in Pagan bosoms, triumphing over even the great law of self-preservation, dealing out death and destruction to parents and children, driving on wars and fightings for purposes of rapine and plunder, shedding the blood of acknowledged benefactors for gain, and devouring enemies with the remorseless fierceness of the tiger or anaconda ;—and all this, in the presence of their gods, and in avowed obedience to their behests. Essentially true is this of the entire pagan world. Alienation from God, leading to deliberate revolt from every shadow of his authority, forms the all-pervading feature of its character, and renders its aspects toward man as well as God, “evil, only evil, and that continually.” “There is none that doeth good, no, not one.” Estimate then, if you can, the magnitude of this difficulty !

3. Another difficulty arises from the local circumstances of large portions of the heathen world.

Climes inhospitable as those of Greenland and Labrador, or of Western Africa, Malaysia, and other equinoctial lands, where either the rigors of perpetual winter or the rays of a vertical sun combine with ice-clad rocks or miasmatic marshes to annihilate the ever-decaying energies of man, present fearfully

appalling obstacles to missionary enterprise. Large sacrifices of life must be heroically made, and still larger sacrifices of the conveniences and comforts of civilized society ; health, ease and abundance must be freely exchanged for sickness, toil and penury ; association with refined and congenial minds, must be relinquished for companionship with the vulgar and the rude, the indolent and the filthy ; the dwarfish Esquimaux and the treacherous Caffre, the bronzed savage of the American wilds, and the dark-hued child of African deserts, must be taken affectionately by the hand and led to the cross, as equally the heirs of immortality, and equally susceptible of cleansing by the blood of Atonement, as the most favored of the sons of earth. And whether it be Hans Egede or Vanderkemp, Brainerd or Mills, Hall or Newell, Lyman or Lowrie, they must brave dangers and plunge into deaths oft, with none but the eye of the Invisible to see, and none but the arm of the Eternal to sustain them, in those fields of labor where biting frosts, or deadly malaria, or the passions of fiends in human form, maintain unquestioned dominion.

And when to all this is added, the common work of the missionary in every land—the labor of accommodating habits of thought to the circumstances of the narrow-minded and sensual, without diminishing the mind's energy—of acquiring new and unwritten languages, transferring them to the printed page, and instructing the undisciplined in the simplest rudiments of useful knowledge, and in the abstruse elements of science ;—thus subduing

at once ignorance, indolence, pride and self-conceit, inciting a thirst for intellectual progress ; and above all, inspiring the high resolve to abandon each vile superstition, and arise and go to Jesus, crying, “ Lord ! save, or I perish ”—and then reflect, that every land under heaven, however inhospitable and forbidding, is embraced in the great commission—we cannot evade the conviction, that difficulties thickly crowd the path of the self-devoted missionary.

4. Still another difficulty springs from the too prevalent scepticism of Christendom on the question of duty to the heathen.

Avowed infidelity on this subject is unpopular ; and high encomiums are often lavished on the disinterested and adventurous spirit, that breaks away from the endearments of home, and the attractions of civilized life, to carry the tidings of salvation to the ends of the earth. Still, in many quarters, there is felt an ill-disguised contempt for the reputed fanaticism that prompts to self-sacrifice for such an object ; for the controlling motives of the missionary are not comprehended, the moral condition of the world is not justly understood, nor is the authority of the King of Zion cordially acknowledged. And hence, the stale objections of other years, though thoroughly disproved in the providence of God, still exert a wide and deadly though unacknowledged influence ; and whether declared or not, it is surmised that the missionary enterprise is impracticable, without the miraculous interposition of Heaven—that little has been accomplished, even

at the cost of large expenditures—that civilization must precede the introduction of a heaven-born system of faith and morals—that the heathen world is more virtuous and happy in its ignorance and barbarism than is commonly believed—that we have heathen enough at home, to call into action all our sympathies and charities—that we have not at command sufficient means to give the Gospel to all nations—that the church must cease her own contentions, throw aside her superstitions, and cultivate a more fraternal spirit among her sons and daughters, ere she assume to bear the olive branch over a contending world—and, that “the time has not come” to rear the temple of the Lord amid the hill-tops of idolatry.

These are either facts or fictions. But, that they are not facts, is susceptible of the clearest proof from history, experience and prophecy. And if they are fictions, they indicate only a godless scepticism, proportioned to their prevalence. But that this scepticism is broadly diffused among “the children of this world,” and over Christendom,—that it operates powerfully to paralyze the energies of the church,—that it leads to the withholding of co-operation in well-concerted plans of benevolent effort, and even arouses a stern resistance to the claims of oppressed humanity,—and, that it involves regardlessness of the soul’s worth, of the value of Jesus’ blood, and the regenerating influences of the Holy Spirit, will not be questioned by the true-hearted observer; nor will the moral atmosphere thus surrounding the living Christian, depressing his holiest affections, en-

feebling his highest resolves, and tempting him to the neglect of his plainest duties, be less dreaded when perceived, nor less anxiously shunned, than the sirocco of the desert, or the miasma of Acheron, by the health-seeking traveler.

5. Another difficulty arises from the character of the intercourse maintained between nominal Christendom and the heathen nations.

The larger portions of the unevangelized world make their first acquaintance with Christianity through men as far removed from its spirit, as those who have never heard of Christ. The cupidity and fraud, the licentiousness and violence of many commercial men and their agents, released from the restraints of Christian association, and tempted by example and opportunity to the indulgence of their ruling passions, are as familiarly known, as they are deserving of abhorrence. The brandy of France, and the rum of New England, the opium of British India, and the cannon of European navies, combined with the intemperance and debauchery, profaneness and falsehood of foreigners thrown into the ports, and resident in the cities of the dark-minded idolater, foster the vicious propensities of his untutored nature, plunge him deeper in pollution, than if left to the unmixed influences of his own debased religion, and increase his repugnance to a Faith that promises no improvement either to his social or moral condition.

But the most subtle and pernicious intercourse with heathen communities is maintained by men who claim to act under Heaven's commission, but

“whose coming is after the working of Satan—with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness ;” men, who, like the priests of Jeroboam and the disciples of Loyola, blend in unholy union the rites of Pagan and Christian worship, transferring the honors of Jehovah to Baal or Brama, and exchanging the simplicity of Christ, for the imposing magnificence of an idol temple. Schwartz and Gerricke in India, Hocker and Rueffer in Persia and Abyssinia, and others of like spirit in South America and the Islands of the sea, encounter an opposition more fierce and obstinate from these “false Apostles,” than from the priests and devotees of the most bloody and obscene superstitions. The thousands of baptized Pagans gathered into churches, whether by the minions of the Romish See, for the glorification of Mary and the aggrandizement of the Papacy—or, by the armed missionaries of Protestant governments, for the consolidation of their power and increase of their revenues,—whether persuaded to repeat their Avè Marias and Pater Nosters in connection with their prostrations and lascivious dances before the shrines of idols, or compelled by force of arms to repeat the Lord’s Prayer and the Ten Commandments within a Christian temple, are not only heathens still, but are more thoroughly fortified against the legitimate influences of the Gospel, than their former brethren in ignorance ; pure Paganism, corrupt and destructive as it is to the soul, yields more readily to the claims of evangelical Christianity, than Paganism baptized into the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Such are some of the difficulties that impede the onward movement of the missionary enterprise ; difficulties to be overcome by the church, only when she shall be found “ steadfast, unmoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord.” And, it is due to truth to say, that they are rather imposing in their aspects, than substantial in their character, for were they accumulated an hundred fold and magnified into impossibilities in our eye, we might still say to them, either severally or collectively, “ What art thou, O great mountain, before Zerubbabel ! ” At the touch of God’s finger they vanish, and before the breath of his nostrils, they are as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor before the whirlwind ; with God, all things are equally possible, as the deliverance of Noah from the deluge, of Daniel from the lion’s den, and of Paul from the prison of Philippi. “ Prayer, pains, and perseverance,” with his blessing, “ accomplish all things.”

And if the soldier braves the dangers of the land and the sea, of the battle-field and the prison-house in defence of his country, or for the glory of his rulers,—if the mariner dares the fury of the elements and the fierce passions of savage men, for the fame of discovery, or the gains of commerce,—and if the merchant encounters the perils of unknown seas, insalubrious climes and hostile governments, for the increase of wealth and of luxury,—shall the follower of Christ succumb to the pressure of no more than equal dangers, and forego the rapturous “ Euge ” from the lips of Christ, “ Well done ! good and faithful servant,” when assured that the everlasting

arms are underneath him, and that the gates of hell shall never prevail against him !

This leads us to the third topic suggested for consideration, viz.

III. The promised reward, “ Your labor shall not be in vain in the Lord.”

The work of missions is the Lord’s work, conducted on the broadest scale. If he that converteth one sinner from the error of his way hideth a multitude of sins, and creates joy among the angels—who shall calculate the blessings conferred on earth and heaven, by the man who throws himself with all his affections and energies, into the work of the world’s conversion ! And, if every man shall receive at the hand of the Lord according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad, then the individual and the church thus self-devoted, and abounding in the work of missions, shall receive abundant grace and glory.

Labor for God ever brings its own reward. Such is the divine constitution, to be recognized on earth as in heaven. God’s blessedness consists in Love, ever outflowing in beneficent action. Angelic happiness springs from ceaseless activity in ministering to them who are the heirs of salvation. And obedience to the same law of love ensures to man the consciousness of acceptance with God, and fellowship with the spirits about the throne.

But, the Apostle addresses the church collectively, and assures her that her labor for the conversion of men to the faith of Jesus, shall not be in vain, and

that in her embodiment, as the visible representative of Christ, she shall receive a reward proportioned to her fidelity.

Thus warranted to apply the promise to the church in all her generations, I say,

1. That Christendom reaps the reward, in the reflex influence of the missionary enterprise on herself.

She glories justly in the superiority of her literature and science ; but never since the world began have they advanced so rapidly and shone so splendidly, as since the commencement of modern missions. The researches of Buchanan in India, and of Jowett in Turkey,—the labors of Fisk and Parsons in Palestine and Syria, of Martyn in Hindoostan and Persia, of Morrison, Milne, and Gutzlaff in China, and the explorations of an hundred others of the same spirit among the spice-bearing isles of the Southern ocean, or the snow-clad forests of the North, the wilds of our own continent, or the burning sands of Africa,—have poured floods of light on the natural history of the world, the physical and intellectual resources of man, the geographical limits of nations and their relative strength, their customs and habits, their languages and modes of thought, their comforts and privations—matters of high practical utility, with all who would judge correctly of the capabilities of the race, and of the best means for its improvement.

Her commercial relations have extended proportionably to her advanced literature and science, and the productions of nations widely separated from her

by intervening oceans, are easily and profitably procured. If the manufactures of our country find their way to Africa and China, to the Sandwich Islands and India, in increasing abundance, and produce correspondingly remunerative returns, it is because the herald of salvation has gone thither, seeking the welfare of the people, changing their habits of life, breaking down their prejudices, and creating a demand for comforts and wealth before unknown.

So, wherever these men of God have gone, they have inspired respect for the lives and property of strangers ;—disarmed the barbarian of his spear and poisoned arrows—warmed his bosom with compassion for the sick and ship-wrecked mariner—and constrained him to divide his last morsel with the famished traveler, and speed him on his way. Thousands in Christian lands have thus been saved the sorrows of widowhood and orphanage, penury, and living death, by the direct influence of missionary establishments : they are so many strong towers into which the distressed run and are safe—so many asylums where the wretched find consolation, the sick obtain healing, and the dying, angelic support. Hence, the earnest inquiry of the sailor, thrown by the violence of the waves on an unknown land—“ Is the Christian missionary here ? ”—no sooner meets an affirmative response, than his fears vanish, —he “ thanks God and takes courage.”

These, however, and others like them, are but the smaller rewards following the discharge of duty,

and unworthy to be compared with those that pertain to "life and immortality."

Of these, however, it must suffice to say—that individual and social piety, depending for its vitality and power on the comprehensive views taken of God and the principles of his government, in connection with man's duty to a revolted world, cannot be vigorously sustained, except by diffusion; and that the indispensable condition on which rests growth in grace and a harvest of future glory, is active devotedness to the work of universal regeneration. The mind is enlivened, the affections are elevated and refined, and the comforts of the Holy Ghost are multiplied, in proportion as the demands on beneficent action are promptly and generously met.

And, looking for the origin of Bible Associations, Tract and Education Societies, Sabbath Schools, Temperance movements, and a thousand other appliances for the elevation of the intellectual and moral character of Christendom, we shall find it in those enlarged views of religious obligation inspired of Heaven, and giving birth to the foreign missionary enterprise more than a hundred years ago, and then stimulating and strengthening those home missionary operations that give no equivocal promise of making our own, the glory of all lands.

Or, if revivals of religion multiply, and long standing churches renew their youth, and infant churches rise to early manhood, and healthful discipline vindicates their purity, and zeal for the progress of truth and love imparts to them the splendor

of the sun, the beauty of the moon, and the terribleness of an army with banners,—if denominational divisions and strifes vanish, and Christians of differing names rush into the embraces of a holier fellowship, to the confusion of gainsayers,—it is because the paramount claims of the Lord's work of missions are admitted, and the carnal, self-aggrandizing policy of darker times discarded.

So the Bible derives new confirmations of its divine authority, from the severe tests applied to it in the progress of its translation into the various languages of men, and from corroborative facts, gathered up from all portions of the earth, illustrative of its history, its doctrines, and its prophecies, and thus opposes an invincible antagonism to rampant infidelity ; while at the same time, the strength of error in all its Protean forms is weakened, and its hopes extinguished, through the rapid accumulation of such proof of Truth's divinity, as missionary investigation is ever bringing to the light.

And then, the noblest specimens of humanity that have ever met the eyes of men or angels, are found on the field of Foreign Missions. Devotion to the world's welfare and moral heroism have never shone in men elevated to thrones of power, or leading on armies to conquest and renown, as in the Eliots and Brainerds, the Careys and Marshmans, the Medhursts and Abeels of missionary fame. And if the mind that conceives and the hand that executes the noblest purposes, be the main constituents of moral greatness, then does greatness belong not less really to Fuller and Bogue, Worcester and Evarts, than to

Luther and Calvin, or Peter and Paul. These are the men, who, with their compeers in labor, and under the direction of the Holy One, bring light out of darkness and order out of confusion,—who supplant barbarism by civilization, superstition by simple faith, servitude by rational liberty, and extinguish the fires of licentiousness by the waters of the river of life, and silence the shrill clarion of war, by the deep-toned harp of heaven !

2. Christendom reaps a still greater reward, in the success of her labors abroad.

Of this success we have the strongest assurance in the promises of God. These promises are not only “Yea and Amen, in Christ Jesus,” but intelligible in their announcement, and unmistakable in their appropriation.

“In the last days, the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it.”

“All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him.”

“They shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know him, from the least of them to the greatest.”

“Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.”

“According to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness ;” “the Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations ;” and “in that day, there shall be one Lord, and his name one.”

Such are the assurances of “the Lord of heaven and earth.” Idolatry, the abominable thing that he hates, shall perish from under these heavens, and the temples of Jehovah shall rise on the ruins of effete superstitions ; the divinely established relationships of life shall be every where recognized, and the face of society changed ; every yoke shall be broken, and whatsoever men would that others should do to them, that they shall do to others ;

“All crimes shall cease, and ancient frauds shall fail ;”

the trial of bonds and imprisonments, of cruel mockings and scourgings, shall be known no more ; the spear and the rack, the dungeons of the inquisition and the flames of the auto-da-fe, the morais of the Pagan, and the scimetar of the Mohammedan, shall be remembered but as the fitful dreams of a maddened world, slumbering through a long and dismal night. Pride and envy, with their kindred passions, shall die out of human hearts, and devotion to the interests of humanity and the glory of God shall succeed them. The rulers of the world shall fear God and work righteousness ; the kings of Tarshish and of the isles, the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts ; yea, all kings shall fall down before him,

and sacrifice their wisdom and power, their wealth and honors on his altars ; and then the blood-thirsty Dyak and the wary Siamese, the haughty Turk and deceitful Greek, the polished European and the groveling African, the diminutive child of the Arctic, and the stalwart Patagonian, shall assimilate and love as brethren,

“ Nor sigh nor murmur, the wide world shall hear.”

Such are the results certain to flow in upon the church when “ abounding in the work of the Lord.”

Other demonstration of “ the exceeding greatness of power ” is not demanded for the completion of the great work in progress, than that which shall turn the undivided attention of the Christian world, to the single object for which the material universe stands. Let the church emulate the fortitude and zeal of Christ and his Apostles, and pour her prayers and tears, her alms and labors into the treasury of the Lord, with the freeness and fullness of primitive ages, and her confidence in the promises of God will gather fresh strength with each revolving year ; but she needs more than the resolution of the monarch who said, “ I’ll have it known that my flag can protect a paroquet ;” even the nobler heroism of the man who in view of bonds and afflictions, exclaimed, “ None of these things move me ; I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake ; when I am weak, then am I strong.”

Though the world shall be converted to God, as certainly as “ he is not a man that he should lie, nor

the son of man that he should repent," yet it is a progressive work, requiring not only firmness and heroism, but practical wisdom for its completion. The most promising fields of labor are to be first selected, as well as the fittest means for their cultivation. The soul of man, if every where equally precious, is not every where equally accessible. Though we honor the spirit that lavished sixty years of unavailing toil on the wandering Calmucs of Tartary, and sought to penetrate the interior of Persia in quest of a few doubtful descendants of the Magi, and hazarded life to recover the Mohammedan-oppressed Copts and Abyssinians from their degrading superstitions, and dared the frozen regions of Labrador, and defied the arrows of death, flying thickly among the Sunderbunds of Hindooostan ; yet the policy is more than questionable, that overlooks at the same time, the equally urgent claims of more salubrious portions of the earth, less burdened with ignorance and superstition. If some fields are more white to the harvest than others, they demand the first attention of the husbandman ; nor are they the fields where cockle and darnel most luxuriantly grow, nor where the fiercest beasts of prey make their haunts ; but a wise economy of compassion and toil forbid the waste of energy and life where unpropitious circumstances crowd out the hope of early success, when localities are open which promise quick and large returns for every expenditure of pious labor.

Missionary enterprises are liable to temporary failure, too, not only through deficiency of wisdom in their conductors, but through the inadequacy of

support derived from the sympathies, prayers, and pecuniary contributions of the churches. So the health of the missionary may fail, and his heart be overborne by discouragement ; or the calamities of war, pestilence, and famine may overflow his field of labor ; and after years of alternating hope and fear, he may retire from his post with the lamentation of the Prophet on his lips,—“ I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for naught and in vain.” Still,

“ Though seed lie buried long in dust,
It sha’nt deceive our hope.”

Egede may mourn over the disappointed hopes of fifteen years’ arduous toil, though seven years of super-added labor, by other men, brings to light the germinating principle of the seed sown, and results in a glorious harvest. Schmidt may abandon Africa after seven years of apostolic effort, believing that he has accomplished nothing ; but fifty years afterwards, he is remembered there, by one, whom he led to Jesus in her childhood, and who loves the shade of the pear-tree planted by her teacher’s hand, and whose faith and love stay up the hands of a new and more successful missionary band. No! the Gospel cannot be preached in its simplicity in vain, whether among the hills of Palestine, the ruins of Nineveh, the fastnesses of Koordistan, the jungles of Burmah, the mosques of Arabia, or the temples of China. As certainly as the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, they will hear it, and sooner or later exult in hope, and glorify God. Busy as earth’s millions are to-day, in their pursuits of gain and self-indul-

gence,—vainly sanguine as they are in their expectations, and reckless of responsibility to God, and of the retributions of eternity, yet when the voice of Love shall reach them from the throne, through the abounding labors of the church, they shall be arrested in their wild career, nations shall be born in a day, the deathless interests of myriads shall be secured, the joys of the church triumphant shall be multiplied, and new glories shall gather around the head of Emanuel. God's word and providence, the power of his truth and the omnipotence of his Spirit, together declare it.

You will permit me, in conclusion, to suggest three

REFLECTIONS.

1. The elements of success in the missionary enterprise are few and simple.

Among these, are the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, especially as he appears in Christ, reconciling the world to himself. When Christ and his cross fill the eye of the church, and he becomes to her "as a bundle of myrrh, or a cluster of camphor in the vineyards of Engedi," she is constrained to declare his loveliness to the world, and conjure all nations to fall down and worship him.

Then, there enters into the spirit of missions, a just appreciation of the worth of the soul,—of the dangers that crowd its pathway to another world,—of its possible salvation through the blood of the God-man, and of its inevitable destiny to weal or wo, agreeably to the image here impressed on it.

Then, the actual condition of the heathen world—its spiritual wants and miseries—its cherished reasonings on man's relations to God and eternity—its idolatries and vices, with the social and moral habits fostered by its false religions,—will be investigated and deplored by every man who has the mind that was in Christ.

Then, are the heathen to be met with all those appliances of wisdom and kindness, that are appropriate to the conversion of the ungodly in enlightened lands—by the rudimental and more advanced processes of education—by instruction in science and intellectual discipline, in agriculture and the mechanic arts, in connection with the clear announcements of evangelical truth, whether in the school-room or on the highway, in the house of God or at the gate of the idol's temple. Knowledge is the mother of devotion, and kindness is the hand-maid of knowledge. Ignorant zeal may multiply gilded crosses, forced baptisms and imaginary conversions ; but the barbarities of men like Magellan and Balboa, can never be converted into instruments of good, nor can oceans wash away the guilt of leaving immortal mind under the oppression of darkness, when “godliness has the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.”

And, when the pagan is brought to the knowledge of the truth, by this various and patient labor, his faith is to be strengthened by watchfulness and forbearance. As the unfledged dovelet has not the sweet note and comely plumage of the parent bird, nor the infant child the vigor and fortitude of the

full-grown man, so the new convert from paganism is deficient in the intelligence and meek firmness of the well-instructed and mature disciple. The same consistency of character and elevation of purpose cannot be anticipated in the recently enlightened heathen, as in the man taught from infancy in the oracles of God. The moral atmosphere in which the one has ever had his being, as little resembles the moral atmosphere of the other, as the pestilential breathings of the moss-green swamp resemble the pure breezes that fan the mountain top. Kairnak and Africander, Duaterra and Romatone, though signal trophies of grace, are not invulnerable to shafts hurled by the mighty Prince of Evil ; for neither Prophet nor Apostle, with their broader and thicker shields, were safe from such assaults ; and, if converts from heathenism back-slide even by hundreds, it is but a repetition of the fact that made the tears of the Apostles flow, and excited their increased diligence and watchfulness ; for beside the deceitfulness of the heart and the carnality common to all men, the deep ignorance of the heathen, the abjectness of their social condition, their vain but venerated traditions, their time-honored customs of profligacy, impelling to infanticide, parricide, Thuggish murders, and cannibalism —all conflict steadily with the holiest efforts to transform them into symmetrical Christians. But in proportion as light increases, through the multiplication of schools and colleges, the elevation of the female mind, the establishment of churches and exercise of salutary discipline, the instructions of

native preachers, the translation and distribution of the Scriptures, and the diffusion of all useful knowledge,—the standard of Christian character will rise, and the attainments of true disciples will become more commensurate with the requisitions of the Bible.

The love of God and joy in the great salvation, a due estimate of the soul's value and the actual condition of the heathen world, wisdom in counsel, and affectionate desires, combined with various and patient labor, form then the main elements of success in the missionary enterprise.

2. Personal consecration to this work is demanded of every believer.

The duty of each member is identical in its nature and claims, with the duty of the entire body of Christ. If prayer, labor, and sacrifice are necessary to the world's conversion, they are equally demanded of one and all who acknowledge Jesus as their Lord and Master. When the spirit that prompted the whole body of Moravian brethren to resolve, individually as well as collectively, to fulfil the Savior's commission, in face of poverty and contempt, and impelled sixty-six of their number within thirty years to lay down their lives for the spiritual redemption of slaves, and other scores to press toward the same sacrificial altar, and sustained Zeisberger and Heinrich in the endurance of jealousy and suspicion, violence and death, for the recovery of wandering savages to the love of God—shall pervade the church at large, and illustrate be-

fore the world the union of confidence in God and personal consecration, then shall be seen

“ New heavens, new earth, ages of endless date
 Founded in righteousness, and peace and love
 To bring forth fruits, joy and eternal bliss.”

This personal consecration, beyond all things else, is needed now ; and whether it appear in the form of fervent and effectual prayer, flowing from the heart of the “ unknowing and unknown ” believer ; or, of the self-denial that prompts the rich man to bestow his thousands, and the poor widow her two mites, and the talented youth to devote his entire life and influence to the world’s regeneration—it is all the same ; humanity claims it, God demands it, glory, honor and immortality reward it. A few recognize the duty, others halt between two opinions, but an immense majority say, “ I pray thee have me excused.”

I once *knew*—and all of you have often heard of—the little band of college youth, whose prayers and deliberations among the hills of Berkshire, and in the sweet seclusion of Andover, gave birth to the most splendid enterprise that gilds the heaven-written pages of our country’s history—and whose was the spirit of entire consecration to the sole object of making known the Savior’s name, throughout the world. The bold and energetic piety of Hall, the meek and quiet devotion of Richards, the far-reaching eye and deep-feeling heart of Mills, and the mingling confidence and tears of their few companions, were but living characteristics of the spirit that animates every disciple of Jesus, entering

successfully into the work of the Lord ; and it is a spirit that can never die, while the promises of God stand firmer than the everlasting hills, though even now it confessedly languishes, and leaves to weak faith a large inheritance of doubts and fears ; but, it shall revive again, and urge onward thousands among successive generations to deeds of noble daring on the broad field of conflict between Michael the Prince, and the Devil and his angels. The young men of our colleges and higher seminaries shall again catch the fire that burned so brightly on their altars a few years since ; and other young men and maidens, old men and children, shall encourage their aspirations, praise the name of the Lord, and partake of the rewards of the wise, who turn many to righteousness ; and when it is said of the fathers still living, as of those now dead, “ Where are they ? ”—their mantles will have fallen upon their children, who shall arise to perfect “ the work of the Lord,” and exult in the world’s redemption from sin’s dominion.

3. “ The time has come ” for the house of the Lord to be enlarged into a dwelling place of all nations.

So the signs of the times declare. The world is thrown open to the eye of Christendom as never before. The facilities of intercommunication between evangelized and unevangelized lands are not only increased, but well-nigh perfected ; so that, indirectly, the influence of Christianity already permeates the earth, through the extending sway of

Christian governments, which, by whatever motives actuated, guarantee protection to men of every language who shall either declare or receive the words of eternal life. Then, the commercial spirit of the age, combined with governmental enterprise, and “ bringing to light the hidden things of darkness,” is multiplying and strengthening the ligaments that bind in harmony the interests of the antipodes, and at the same time extends, wherever it goes, a portion of the moral influence pervading Christian lands. Science, too, extends her boundaries, and not only, like her Author, “ weighs the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance,” and comprehends the adjustments of creative wisdom throughout the broad expanse of the solar system,—but condescends to the humbler task of exploding the absurd theories that have long cramped the intellect of India ; dispelling the ignorance that with incubus effect has settled down upon the bosom of Africa ; dissipating the airy fancies of “ the Celestials ” ; extinguishing the bloody orgies of demons incarnate, and turning into shame “ the wisdom of the wise, and the understanding of the prudent.”

Beyond and better than all this—the church herself goes forth in the strength of the Lord, to “ preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God ; ” her voice is already heard, though faintly, in the most distant lands, and among the most barbarous nations ; at her approach darkness recedes, and the “ True

Light" shines with increasing splendor ; behind her, the desert has already become a fruitful field, and the dry land, springs of water ; at her touch the synagogues of Satan are transformed into temples of the living God, and worshipers of devils prostrate themselves in her presence before " the King eternal."

Indeed, the church combines in her constitution the elements of indestructible vitality and irrepressible energy. She outlives the most flourishing kingdoms of the world, and triumphs over their downfall. Egypt, famed for skill in science, arts and arms—Tyre, pre-eminent for commerce, opulence and strength—Assyrian Nineveh, the home of elegance, luxury and pride—Babylon, the Chaldees' excellency, mistress and arbiter of nations—all, like the Carthaginians and Romans, the Greeks and Saracens of later days, though they " caused their terror in the land of the living, have gone down to their graves, set in the sides of the pit, and there rest upon their swords," beneath the outstretched arm of Zion. And still she lives, to witness the overthrow of every antagonistic power, whether civil or ecclesiastical, Pagan or Mohammedan. Meek in her spirit, firm in her purpose, simple in her confidence and ever onward in her movements, neither marshaled armies, persecution's fires, philosophy's pretensions, nor Satan's stratagems, are aught but briars and thorns before the devouring flame ; from conquering she goes on to conquer, till all the crowns of earth are laid at Jesus' feet, when heaven pours forth the triumphal song—" The kingdoms of

the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord,
and of his Christ."

" Fixed in the rolling flood of endless years
The pillar of the eternal plan appears,
The raving storm and dashing wave defies,
Built by that Architect who built the skies."

Scarce a single generation has passed away, since Zion's duty to the sin-enslaved nations began to be seriously discussed under the shade of the haystack, and within the walls of a seminary; nor was it then the dream of the most sanguine, that at this hour, twelve hundred stations, wide apart as the East from the West, on heathen ground, would be occupied by three thousand missionaries and their assistants,—that native schools and colleges would be sending forth hundreds of educated heathen to spread the illumination of human and divine science over illimitable tracts of darkness,—that the press would be scattering its "myriads of healing leaves along the pathway of every herald of salvation,—that thirty millions of Bibles would be revealing the counsels of heaven to men in two hundred different languages,—that heathen children by hundreds of thousands would be found on their way to Jesus for his blessing,—and that willing converts to Christ would be numbered by fifties of thousands.

Less was this moral revolution contemplated, as lying in the purpose of Providence then, than the wondrous increase of our country's population and territory since, or, than the speed with which steamships traverse oceans, locomotives measure distances, and lightnings convey intelligence from land to land.

But God is accomplishing great things in his providence among the kingdoms of the earth, in their domestic institutions and civil relations, scattering the proud in their imaginations, putting down kings from their thrones, making 'darkness his secret place, and his pavilion round about him dark waters and thick clouds of the sky,' drying up rivers, spanning oceans, opening to the light the long-hid treasures of the earth, and preparing the way for the return of his ransomed ones to their rest, by quickly successive revolutions in the political world, and by new and rapid developments of the laws and energies of universal nature.

Full of grandeur now, is the object before us,—to bring the world into subjection to Christ, diffusing peace and joy through all its habitations,—to defeat hell's dark designs, and restore a fallen race to Emanuel's arms,—and then to fill heaven with rapturous hosannas, by the union of all human voices with the multitudes about the throne, till as the voice of many waters, and the voice of mighty thunderings, they shall echo through the universe the joyous anthem, "Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth,—and the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, are given to the people of the saints of the Most High."

Thus, dear brethren, may we ever sacrifice self-indulgence to duty, surmount difficulty by steadfastness, make sure the promised reward by fidelity unto the death; and then, weak and unworthy as we are, shall we rise to the holy city, the Jerusalem that is

above, and behold “ the glory and the honor of all nations brought into it,” and unite in the ascription of “ Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever.”

Rev. Dr. Riddle's Sermon

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS,

PREACHED AT PORTLAND, MAINE, SEPTEMBER 9, 1851.



(5)

Ground of Confidence in Foreign Missions.

A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT PORTLAND, MAINE, SEPTEMBER 9, 1851,

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR

FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AT THEIR

FORTY-SECOND ANNUAL MEETING.

BY DAVID H. RIDDLE, D. D.,
OF PITTSBURGH, PENN.

BOSTON:
PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN, 42 CONGRESS STREET.
1851.

SERMON.

ISAIAH xli. 14, 15.

FEAR NOT, THOU WORM JACOB, AND YE MEN OF ISRAEL; I WILL KEEP THEE, SAITH THE LORD AND THY REDEEMER, THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL. BEHOLD, I WILL MAKE THEE A NEW SHARP THRESHING INSTRUMENT, HAVING TEETH. THOU SHALT THRESH THE MOUNTAINS, AND BEAT THEM SMALL, AND MAKE THE HILLS LIKE CHAFF.

THESE words illustrate "the wisdom of God in a mystery," as distinguished from "the wisdom of this world," that cometh to nought. In the estimate of this world, power is the great object of desire and idol of admiration. The philosophy of human enterprises is, that success is rationally to be expected, as the instrumental agency is adequately proportioned in power to the result to be accomplished. Is a great work to be done; a railway, for example, to be constructed? Physical power, and the pecuniary means of obtaining it, must be provided, in proportion to the obstructions to be overcome, the mountains to be leveled, the valleys to be elevated, and the rivers and ravines to be spanned. Is a locomotive to be propelled along the highway, or a vessel along our rivers or across the ocean in a definite time? The propelling power or momentum must be proportioned to the speed desired, or resistance

to be overcome. Again, is a community or nation to be moved and moulded anew, in political principles or social customs? Power, of a different kind, must be employed, proportioned to the amount of existing error, prejudice, force of habit, or indisposition to change,—mental power, reasoning, persuasion, eloquence, and the enginery for bringing this power into contact with the mind and heart.

Such is the wisdom of the world, and such is its philosophy of success. In carrying on his great plan, “according to the good pleasure of his will,” God seems resolved to demonstrate another and deeper philosophy of power. It seems good in his sight so to accomplish results by instrumentalities, that in every case “the excellency of the power,” the superadded element which alone philosophically explains the result, “may be of God,” and not of the instrument employed. “God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God.”

Look at the case presented by the text. A great result is to be accomplished. Mighty resistance is to be overcome, mountains are to be threshed and beaten small, and hills made like chaff. And what is the agency employed? “Thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel;” “few men,” according to one interpretation, “dead men” in another; powerless and inadequate on either or any interpretation. Where is the proportion which human philosophy demands as indispensable? On its principles, what prospect is there of success? Yet the voice of God says, “Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel.” The philosophy of success here is the help

of the Almighty, supplying the obvious inadequacy of the instrumental agency. "I will help thee,"—divine efficiency, working through human weakness. "I will make thee," or cause thee to become, "a new sharp threshing instrument, having teeth ; and thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and make the hills like chaff." The beautiful principle contained in this passage may be thus expressed:—*Want of proportion between instrumentality and results is no ground of discouragement in enterprises to be conducted by faith in God.*

This principle, illustrating the divine philosophy which governs God's great administration, would allow of a great variety of applications. We purpose on this occasion to apply it to the great enterprise in which we are engaged, and are here assembled to promote, *the work of foreign missions*; an application which all will grant is admissible, and by the divine blessing may be profitable.

I. Guided by the drapery of this passage, let us first contemplate *the inadequacy of the agency*, or want of proportion between the instrumentality employed and the result to be accomplished. For this purpose place in juxtaposition these two elements, a worm and the everlasting hills and mountains. What a contrast ! What a sense of disproportion is at once produced ! According to ordinary calculations, can a worm ever thresh these mountains, and beat them small, and make these hills like chaff ? The reply of philosophy and experience is, No ! It is impossible. To expect it is the acme of absurdity. Again, think of Israel as a people, in comparison

with the colossal empires and organized structures of power and opposition by which they are surrounded. What disproportion, estimated by human standards! Can these "few men," destitute of all elements of influence, inferior in science and wealth, wrestle successfully with the countless numbers and almost limitless resources of the rest of the world? Anterior to the event, who would venture to say that this nation, in the principles it embodied and was designed to perpetuate, would exist, and be wielding power when the whirlwind of ages had swept away these mighty empires, leaving only dust on the history and memory of their former greatness? Sense and human philosophy have here but one reply. "It cannot be."

Such is the contrast, figuratively presented, between the resources of the church, and the results to be accomplished in the enterprise of foreign missions. On the one hand are "mountains," whose massive and gigantic proportions it is difficult, with all our increased appliances of information, fully to realize,—mountains of error and iniquity, idolatry, superstition and false religion. "The strength of the hills" is here also "girded with power." Mighty systems, the growth of ages, the work of Satan and his auxiliaries, reared by the rulers of the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness in high places, exerting their powers of construction, in many instances without any counteraction for ages, like coral workers in the depths of the sea, systems interwoven with the philosophy and science, associations and social customs of different nations, with the memory of the ancestral dead, venerable for antiquity, proud

in conscious power, strong-holds where prejudices and passions are entrenched! Yes, brethren, great mountains! The hand that reared these emblems of strength and endurance, over the geography of the earth, has selected them as best adapted to convey the reality. Verily, even the Himmalayas and the Caucasus are only "figures of the true." Let any man carefully analyze the component elements of any one of these systems, Buddhism, Brahminism, Fetishism, Mohammedanism, or, worst of all, corrupted Christianity, "the mystery of iniquity," which began to work in apostolic times, and is coming to its grand climacteric in these last ages; let him try to unravel the manifold complications of caste, entangling in its web every grade and class of society, presenting at every point a fresh antagonism to the truth; and he will see the appropriateness of this figure to express the facts that meet us all over the field which "is the world," and be better able to measure the magnitude of the result to be accomplished. These great mountains we may not wisely, and cannot truthfully despise or deprecate.

And what, on the other side, have we of instrumental agency? "Worm Jacob, and few men," the very emblems of weakness and inadequacy. These words figuratively, but forcibly and fairly, represent the agency employed.

1. It is so intrinsically. The infinite Jehovah, who "sitteth on the circle of the earth," in thus designating Jacob, uses a figure indeed, but only thereby more impressively conveys the fact. By this selected phraseology he testifies the truth in the case, not only of ancient Israel, but of his people, the "true

Israel" of God, in all ages. They are wormlike in weakness, "few men," in themselves utterly destitute of resources adequate to the result described.

2. It is and should always be regarded so in their own estimation. The great model and representative of God's Israel, in his incarnate relations said, "I am a worm, and no man." This conveys the true sentiment of every Christian, in regard to his own independent resources. This is the right feeling of the church of God, when she recognizes her instrumental relations to the great work she is appointed to do. Her energies, irrespectively of almighty aid, are as disproportioned to the resistance, as a worm to the everlasting mountains. This is a sober estimate of human agency, without exaggerated diminution or affected humility, the very sentiment which God's word, in its great revealed principles and its record of his past operations, would lead us habitually to cherish. He would have us always know and feel the truth, just as it is; not think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but soberly, as he has given us the measure of believing. "If a man," — and the same is applicable to any portion of the church, — "think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." Let us allow no illusions to unsettle our proper conceptions of ourselves as God's instruments. "Thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel." Even the most cursory comparison of our weakness with the magnitude of the work produces this feeling. But this sense of inadequacy comes over us more overwhelmingly, as we measure the mountains to be threshed and beaten small more definitely and com-

prehensively. At the base of some gigantic pile of granite, upheaved by ancient convulsions, frowning upon us, and rearing itself as if in very mockery around us, what a sense have we of insignificance, of worm-like weakness, not so much as a deduction as an instinct ! What is man before Mont Blanc ? How does he feel amidst the awful immensities and everlasting solitudes of Himmalaya ? Judging from analogous but inferior circumstances of grandeur, in his own estimation he is less than nothing and vanity. Could the arm of all flesh concentrated into one, and with all its enginery, remove these mountains ? So when we contemplate, either in general or in detail, the granitic formations over the field of effort, the instinctive and irrepressible feeling, the feeling God would have us cherish, is one of withering insignificance and incompetency. We are worm Jacobs, even when called to "thresh the mountains ;" "earthen vessels," even when filled with "the excellency of the power." Shall the axe boast itself against him that smiteth therewith," or "the thing formed" for a mere instrument say, "Why hast thou made me thus ?" The besom that sweeps the nations, is but a besom still.

3. This agency is so esteemed by others, especially the antagonist forces. "Weak things of the world," or in the world's estimation, "things which are despised," yea, "things which are not," have no existence amongst their elements of power or means of success. We may conceive how weak and contemptible were "Jacob" and the "men of Israel," in the estimation of contemporaneous empires, Assyria, for example, or Babylon and her proud

monarch, Egypt and her immense resources of learning and enginery of power ; especially at this period, when apparently on the verge of annihilation, internally divided, and externally encircled by enemies, and just about to go into captivity. We can fancy them, as the best expression of scorn, using the language of God himself, “ Worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel ! ” “ What do these feeble Jews ? ” said one who represented the opposition in all ages. “ Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.” Such too is the estimate of the world, even of its princes, at all times and even in our day, who judge of the probability of results by the standard of worldly calculation. “ What do these feeble Christians ? ” How chimerical and wild, to the merely intellectual man, is the very conception of the missionary enterprise ! Even when sincerity is awarded, it is the sincerity of enthusiasm, the very place for the most pertinent application of the epithet “ romantic.” How can men of reason and common sense, capable of estimating in other enterprises the elements of power and success, be seriously engaged in a work so visionary, or anticipate results so baseless. “ The prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad.”

Nor are such conclusions unwarrantable, on their principles. If we consider the world numerically, what an emphasis is there in the expression “ few men,” as applied to the instruments of its subjugation ? The materials of this contrast are now almost universally accessible and available. The contrast itself is familiar to all intelligent friends of

missions. What is Christendom, the whole of nominal Christendom, compared with paganism? On a map of the globe, marked according to its moral characteristics, what proportion does light bear to darkness, the portions where Christianity has penetrated and prevails, in any sense and form, to those under the unbroken dominion of heathenism or the lurid glare of Mohammedanism? How few the followers of the Lamb, compared with those of the Beast and the False Prophet?

What proportion, again, does evangelical Christendom bear to that which is nominal merely? And still further, what proportion of hopefully evangelical Christians are alive to the responsibilities and glory of this work? How few make the conversion of the world their paramount object, and every thing else subservient? How few know experimentally, as a living principle, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," or enter into the fellowship of his vicarious sufferings for the good of others, while acknowledging that "one died for all," thus placing all under equally tender obligations not to live unto themselves.

Considering missionaries as exponents of the faith and strength of Christendom, how "few men" are in the missionary field, though the number, thanks to God, in later years has swelled so greatly? How few lights yet twinkle, where thick darkness covers the people? How few proclaim God's covenant in "the dark places of the earth," "full of the habitations of cruelty?" Amidst this tempest-tossed ocean, few vessels indeed are freighted with the treasures of eternal life. Walking by sense,

and not by faith, and looking at the nations around them, the paucity of their numbers, often lessened by death, our stinted sympathy and tardy assistance, is it any wonder that they sometimes say, "What are these among so many? We are but as a drop in the bucket, or the small dust in the balance." Hear what Dr. Duff says:— "I speak the plain truth. Looking around over all these immense multitudes, comparing them with the smallness and utter inadequacy of the agency brought to bear upon them, it seems like the attempt, by means of a few twinkling tapers, to turn the darkness of the cloudy night into the meridian brightness of unclouded day; or with a few spades to go and at once level the Appenines and the Alps; or with a few buckets to go and drain the German and Atlantic oceans; or with a few pocket-knives go and cut down the Hungarian forests; or with a few squibs and crackers to go and assail the fortress of Gibraltar; or with a web of gossamer to go and capture the crocodile of the Nile or the whale of the ocean. It looks almost like idiocy run mad, like absurdity in hysterics, like illusion dancing in the maddest frenzy, like the unsubstantial dream or vision of the dreamer, who dreams that he has been dreaming." When one goes out, under the impulse of mere romance or personal affection, and romance gives place to stern reality, and personal affection conflicts with disease and lassitude and untold abominations, is it strange that they seem like grasshoppers, and the heathen like Anakim, and say, "They are too mighty for us, and we cannot subdue them!" These "few men," amidst countless masses of

immortal minds, each "dead in trespasses and sins," and most of them linked by ties apparently indissoluble to existing systems of superstition or social abomination, must feel like Jonah, as he trod alone the streets of that great city, Nineveh. Judged by human philosophy, contrasting simply the instrumental agency and the results to be accomplished in a single case or in the whole combined, what an infinite absurdity to expect success ! As well might a worm overturn mountains, as these "few men" transform these millions.

It seems to be a part of God's settled plan to produce and perpetuate this sense of inadequacy. He chooses "weak things" to confound the mighty, and "things which are not to bring to nought things that are." The instruments of God's selection, to be properly qualified, must not only acknowledge, but be willing to glory in this arrangement. He that purposes to stain the pride of all human glory, says, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, or maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart," in its expectation of success, "departeth from the Lord," by transferring its confidence any where else. Intellectual resources, pecuniary means, and strong organizations may become arms of flesh, and serve to engage the carnal confidences of half-believing Christians on wrong reliances, so that they have sometimes to be removed, crippled or destroyed. When Gideon was to be made "the sword of the Lord" against Midian, his host was reduced to "few men," that no might or glory should be ascribed to the instrument. When the brazen serpent, once the instrument of salvation, was

perverted to an amulet, it was ground to powder and called "Nehushtan." When the ark of God was prostituted to mere magical purposes, in the spirit of fetishism, as the cross is often now, it fell into the hands of the Philistines. Yea, when he who was "in the form of God," and "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," came to achieve the great victory, "he humbled himself," "took upon him the form of a servant," and was found in the fashion and feeling and infirmity of a man, that this great principle might even here be preserved intact, and by this illustrious exemplification be made intelligible, as the governing idea of all God's operations through his selected instrumentalities. "Worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel ! "

Such, brethren, is the inadequacy of the agency, or the want of proportion between the instrumentality employed and the results to be accomplished, in the great enterprise in which we are engaged. Let us ever cherish the right spirit in regard to this point. Ever let us realize the inadequacy of the instrumental agency, even if ever so much increased. From the extraordinary influx of wealth and intellectual resources into the church in these last days, the natural result of Christian activity, we may be approximating the critical period in the development of this great enterprise, the hour and power of temptation to fleshly confidences, and to forgetfulness of the great truth, that it is "not by might nor by power" that the work is to be done. In the reign of Solomon gold was as silver, and silver as brass in the streets of Jerusalem ; and it became necessary, to prevent wrong conclusions and false confidences,

that four-fifths of the whole numerical strength of the nation should be severed from it, that Judah should boast only in the Lord. When primitive Christianity was embodied in "few men," opposed and persecuted, her power was resistless, her life perpetuated, and her limits enlarged, amidst all the bloody scenes through which she passed. It might have seemed that when installed in the court of the Cesars, and invested with imperial power, the remaining conflict would have been short and glorious. But, as you are all aware, it was not so. So when the reformers relied on God and the sword of the Spirit, their victories astonished even themselves, and made their antagonists tremble for existence. But when, frightened at their own successes and the excesses which seem almost necessarily incident to the human factor in the elements of progress, they allied themselves to power and patronage, the onward and outward work ceased; and all their resources were needed to conserve what had been gained, and oppose the reactionary tendency which succeeded.

Just so at any period when special agencies, eminently blessed and honored, come to be considered the great power of God and exclusive channels of his victorious might, they are allowed to shrivel into insignificance, to become a stench in the nostrils of the pious, like Herod, who gave not God the glory, and was eaten of worms, weak and chattering mementoes of fatuity, withered arms of flesh, on which it would be the acme of folly any longer to lean. The perils of the experimental period of any great enterprise are many and peculiar, but not comparable

with those which environ the period of prosperity, when the worm in his own estimation or that of others becomes a giant, and forgets where his strength is found. If the Christian or the church is ever disposed to say aloud, or in the secrecy of pride, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built," God will find ways and means of expelling the proud spirit, though it should require, as in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, the passing over of seven times amongst the beasts of the field. We are, and God knows it, and he has said it, and we should feel it, "worm Jacob" and "men of Israel," and nothing else, in our best estate altogether vanity, utterly, utterly weak and inadequate!

II. But in the second place, notwithstanding this confessed and entire inadequacy of instrumental agency, there is no ground of discouragement, provided we view aright, and make available by faith, the infinite resources promised to render the instrumentality efficacious. "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel." Why? Because "I will help thee, saith the Lord and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." "I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument, having teeth." Here a new element enters into the explanation of the result, a factor in the moral calculus which makes an infinite difference. He who is "infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth," says, "I will help thee." This is the pledge of Almighty assistance. Thou art, indeed, in thine own estimation and the judgment of others, a worm, utterly incompetent to this work.

But “I will help thee !” Alone, and of thyself and by thyself, thou canst do nothing ; but I will cause thee to become an instrument, that can do all things. “Thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and make the hills like chaff.” Almighty power can energize the weakest instrumentality for any conceivable purpose. With God working in us and by us, we can work out all “the good pleasure of his goodness.”

This is a right view of the infinite resources promised. We grant that promise was primarily to his ancient people. But is it not the word of Him who is “the same yesterday, to-day, and forever,” himself, “without variableness or shadow of turning,” in every age and dispensation ? It is the “Ancient of Days,” ever uttering afresh the oracle, as from the throne, to his people. The Lord our Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, is Jesus Jehovah, “over all, God blessed forever,” who has “power over all flesh,” yea, “all power in heaven and earth,” “head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all,” he by whom and for whom all things were created at first, and by whom they consist, are kept in being, beauty and harmony, upholding all things by the word of his power, and “able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.” It is he who, at a later period, when he had been made flesh, and by himself had purged our sins, and was about to ascend to the glory he had with the Father before the world was, said, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” He who was, and

is, and is to come, the Almighty, promises, "I will help thee." What human or angelic conception can fully grasp what is conveyed in this promise? It is the voice of a King, yea, of "the King of kings and Lord of lords," who speaks, and it is done, who commands, and it stands fast. It is not poetic fancy, but a glorious fact, poetically expressed. "The voice that rolls the stars along," declares that "all the promises in him are yea, and in him amen, to the glory of God." The element of power here conveyed, on every rational principle, is adequate to any conceivable result, even through the weakest instrumentality he chooses to select, and is more illustrious in proportion to the acknowledged inadequacy of the agency employed. We glory in infirmity, that this power may have its true place. Here then is the philosophy of success, the rational basis of hope in attempting what he has commanded, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," discipling them "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

But this infinite power is made available only by faith. "All things" that are to be done, "are possible to him that believeth." Nothing is too hard for God, or for us, if we have the faith of God, "who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things that be not, as though they were." He could not, consistently with his plan, do "many mighty works there," and in many places and periods since, "because of their unbelief." "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say to this mountain remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove." This

was, indeed, the faith of miracles ; but Christ says, " Greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father." Moral miracles, the miracles of faith, are greater, and bring greater glory to God, than those that are merely physical. Hence he says again, " It is expedient for you that I go away," that this new spiritual dispensation of power, which is to last to the end of the world and of the mystery of God, may be inaugurated. Faith of the right quality, reposing on the promise and power of God, and calmly going forth to the appointed work, though but as a grain of mustard-seed in quantity, would remove these mountains, whose growth and gigantic greatness cause us to stagger and faint, as certainly, and on the same principle, as in apostolic times it availed to raise the dead and cast out devils. It is but the same almighty power, working through an appointed channel to the promised result. The faith that eminently gives glory to God in every age, is that which staggers not at improbabilities or impossibilities suggested by sense when a promise and command are given, but is " fully persuaded " that whatsoever he has promised he is able also to perform, and by the precise instrumentality he is pleased to select and make efficient by his superadded excellency of power.

What we want most of all, more than money or men, intellectual resources or an overflowing treasury, or wisdom and prudence in their management, is such faith as will bring the infinite and pledged resources of our almighty Head, the living Jesus at the right hand of the Father, to the aid of our

instrumentality. Along with a deepening sense of our inadequacy, we want a more vivid, living, abiding apprehension of his actual position as our Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, of the vastness of his power, the amplitude of his promise and his infinite veracity and trustworthiness. Here we find the life and power of all Christian enterprises, especially of this in which we are engaged. With this faith, victory is sure. This is the victory over the world and all forms of opposition.

We talk of power, physical or mechanical power, intellectual power, the power of money, of numbers, of nations. Men seek after power in these forms, and sometimes sacrifice peace, and hazard salvation for its possession, and the privilege of wielding it temporarily for the astonishment and admiration of worms like themselves. We do not disparage such power or its results, or envy the poor immortality it secures. But what is it to the power of faith, which makes us "partakers of the divine nature?" What has it done, or rather what has it not done? "By it the elders obtained a good report." "It has wrought righteousness," "subdued kingdoms," "stopped the mouths of lions," "quenched the violence of fire." And why should such things be thought incredible, if faith links the creature with one who fainteth not, neither is weary? If it is the medium along which strength is poured to the extent of reciprocity, a capacity enlarging till filled with all the fullness of God, why should any bounds be placed to its possible achievements? Faith can make a worm a giant, yea, can invest the feeblest instrument with more than a giant's power,

even "the power of God." "Fear not," "worm Jacob."

If we had this faith, how could we fear? It is only for lack of this that we ever stagger, when we look at the greatness of the work or the feebleness and fewness of the instrumentalities. "Oh! Lord God, we have no might against this great company," "neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon thee." "What art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel, thou shalt become a plain." As "perfect love casteth out fear," in regard to our personal salvation, so perfect faith, grasping the fullness of the promise and power, casts out all fear of failure. The nature of the human mind forbids the contemporaneous prevalence of two such antagonist principles as faith and fear. A blessed philosophy, endorsed by the Savior! "Oh thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me." When these two factors exist, infinite power and living faith to make it available, the product is equal to every thing which accords with the will and purpose of God, and in doing which he is pleased to use human instrumentality.

III. Let us see, in the last place, whether this is not true of the enterprise in which we are engaged.

1. Is not this thing to be done? Are not these mountains to be threshed and beaten small, and these hills to be made like chaff? Is He not to reign, till he has put down all authority and rule? Are not "all principalities and powers" of opposition to be made

subject to him? "We see not yet all things put under him," though so many centuries have passed by; but is that blessed One, who by the grace of God tasted death for every man, and is now "crowned with glory and honor" at the Father's side, and "expecting till his enemies be made his footstool," and this earth the place of his dominion,—is he to be disappointed of his covenanted prerogatives? Are not the heathen given to him for an inheritance? Are not the uttermost parts of the earth his purchased possession? Shall not every knee bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, whether of things in heaven, or earth, or under the earth? When we sing,

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till suns shall rise and set no more,"

do we not believe it? Was he not manifested to destroy these works of the devil, these great mountains, the mountains of his power and pride? Was not this "the intent" for which the universe was created by him, and is kept in being for him, "according to the eternal purpose," "the mystery of his will," "hid from ages and from generations," but made known in these last times by the apostles and prophets through the Spirit? Is it not a part of our privilege, in preaching "among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ," "to make all men see" and enjoy with us "the fellowship of the mystery," and to co-operate with us in the sublime glory of its accomplishment? Is not this the grand

intention of “the only wise God,” resolved on in one eternity, steadily prosecuted through the whole intervening episode of time, and which another and succeeding eternity shall see gloriously consummated, in ignorance or disbelief of which all philosophy is at fault, and the whole scheme is inexpressibly and distressingly mysterious? If this is not to be done, is the word of God true; or has he any final purpose in this scene of things, stretching “from everlasting to everlasting?” Yea, verily, it is to be done. The time is coming when he will say, “It is done; the mystery of God is finished.” “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.” Thus the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

2. And is not this to be done also by human instrumentality? Yes! “Fear not, thou worm Jacob, thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and make the hills like chaff.” We must distinguish, where God has distinguished, but not separate what he has united, almighty efficiency and human instrumentality. God created all things “to the intent that *now*,” as the period, and *here* as the theatre, and “*through the church*,” as the instrumentality, “might be known” “to principalities and powers in heavenly places” his “manifold wisdom,” “according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Yes, God in Christ is the great executive of the everlasting purpose; angels, principalities and powers in heavenly places are the august spectators, which things they desire to look into beyond all other spectacles; but we, worm Jacobs, are the

instruments! "The world to come," of which the glowing language of prophets is full, he does not bring into subjection by angelic instrumentality, "the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." No. They might possibly, they do covet our privileges in this strife with "the rulers of the darkness of this world," "spiritual wickedness in high places." They may be, and possibly are astonished at our lethargy and want of appreciation; but they know that we, and not they, are "workers together with God," the instrumentality he is pleased to select, to whom they are but ministering spirits, and of whose successes they are enraptured witnesses, and possibly privileged heralds to the rest of creation.

Brethren, our faith, if intelligent and available, must embrace clearly these two great principles, that the work is to be done, for he has so purposed, and we are to do it; that "the excellency of the power" is of God, and the glory of the instrumentality is of us, worm Jacobs and men of Israel, weak, inadequate in ourselves, but mighty through God, and relying on his almighty and promised resources.

With this faith, expulsive of fear, and grasping the infinite resources promised, we need not be discouraged, however deeply we realize our own weakness, and however clearly we comprehend the immense magnitude of the work. The voice that commands us to do the work, says "Fear not, for I am with thee. Be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee;

yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Thine enemies "shall be ashamed and confounded ; they shall be as nothing. " Thou shalt seek them, and shall not find them." " I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree and the myrtle, and the oil tree. I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together. I have a long time holden my peace ; I have been still." " Now I will destroy and devour at once." " I will make waste mountains and hills," "make darkness light," and "crooked places straight." " These things will I do, and not forsake them," that all "may see and know, and consider and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this." These are the words of Him that weighs the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance, who measures the waters in the hollow of his hand, and comprehends the dust of the earth in a measure, to whom all "the nations are as a drop of a bucket" and "the small dust of the balance," yea, less than nothing and vanity. Why then should we fear ? Or why shall we not go up and take the land ? We are able to do it.

Fathers and brethren, we are gathered here as the representatives of the churches, at this annual "feast of tabernacles," to survey the field, and calculate our resources, and project anew our plans of operation for the future. We are assembled too, in the providence of God, in a place hallowed by many sweet associations, a place where faith had once a beautiful and living exemplification, where Payson lived and labored, whence, in the days of his flesh, the

prayers of Payson went up to heaven with strong crying and tears, where the spirit of Payson and of the patriarchs of this enterprise are present ! Oh ! could we here and now have a pentecostal baptism of the Spirit, vivifying our faith, giving us a sight of Jesus on the throne, and enabling us to grasp and appropriate the whole comprehensiveness of his promised aid, imparting to us all the spirit of " power and of love and of a sound mind," what would be the style of our projects and the extent of our expectations ? What wonders might we not achieve ? These worm Jacobs and men of Israel, made to feel aright themselves, would have power to go back and wake up all our churches to the true feeling, and demolish mountains of unbelief, lethargy, and worldliness in our own land. One man, strong in the Lord, properly alive to this great idea like Paul, a living temple of an indwelling divinity, living, as he did, a life of faith upon the Son of God, could in a single year make the energies of a comparatively slumbering church tell mightily on the removal of the mountains of error and sin in other lands. He could make this cause appear to all, as it is in truth, the grandest ever contemplated by the mind, or challenging the co-operation of man, as infinitely above the ordinary projects of our fellow men as mind is above matter. He might open closed coffers, whence millions of superfluous wealth, owned by professing Christians, now rusting or prostituted to ignoble purposes of personal vanity and pride, might flow forth, accompanied by the prayer of faith, to bless a world lying in wickedness ! What might we not witness, if all these fathers and brethren and

mothers and sisters would carry forth from this sweet and solemn convocation the faith that makes a worm a giant, mighty through God to the pulling down of strong-holds ! Instrumentality enough is here aggregated to-night to shake the powers of darkness, did our faith fully realize who says, " I will help thee." We may go on, making our hundreds thousands, and thousands millions, gather up men by thousands, all intellectually qualified too ; but what are they, after all ? Worm Jacobs ! If too many and too confident, the reliance of Christians may be transferred to them ; and half believers or unbelievers, judging of success from adequacy of means, may be induced to make investments, and hope for dividends, till God is offended, and shows that in his plan the strength and wisdom of men are weakness and folly. Faith in God our Redeemer is what we want above all things ; and probably this is the blessing yet in reserve for us, in floods of which the showers of Pentecost were but earnests. This may be the form of Christ's coming in great power and glory, to bring the whole energies of omnipotence to the problem of threshing the mountains, along the channel of the church's faith ? Then the glorious period would come, when the light of the moon would be as the sun, and the light of the sun seven fold ; when the weak of the flock would be as David, and David as the Angel of the Lord ; when one would chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, as " the mouth of the Lord hath spoken," and angels and principalities are yet to witness.

And if so, if this new era of faith and power and

triumph is to be, when and where shall the blessing begin, if not now and here? How many hearts look forward to these periods, from distant continents, with interest and expectation? What deep affections and desires cluster and concentrate at this point, at this time, from earth, possibly from heaven also; from churches and closets and missionary stations, and why not also from "the cloud of witnesses" now at home!

Here are sojourning dwellers in almost every part of the world, from our own land and foreign lands, from the Green and White mountains, from the rock-bound coasts of New England, from the great valley and the mighty West. Here are representatives of other climes, whose homes are on the other side of the globe. Yet are all here "with one accord in one place." Here, we look back over a half century closed, filled with wonders that God has wrought. We look forward to another now begun, which may exceed in glory. Here, at a period when all hearts are full of expectancy of some new manifestation of power, why should we not expect "the promise of the Father," and be endowed with power from on high. Is the Spirit of the Lord straightened? Have his greatest and last effusions yet been enjoyed? Will not the wonders of the last days, yet in reserve, the triumphs of the spiritual when the divine philosophy of power is clearly grasped, equal and transcend the wonders of the physical and the mental in the departments of science and art? Is there not a period when, in a nobler sense than ever before, the church is to arise and shine, her light being come, and the glory of the Lord risen upon

her, and when the glorious things spoken of Zion are to be fulfilled ? On the soberest interpretations of prophecy, without assuming to be wise above what is written, or that we comprehend all the symbols and figures of the word of the Eternal in their full extent, are not the final scenes of the mighty plan to excel all that precedes in glory ? Are not these shakings of heaven and earth preparatory and premonitory ? Are we not warranted to anticipate, at some period, an interposition that will actualize the high and glorious images of some yet unfulfilled portions of the sacred word ? Is there not to be an end or fulfillment, as well as an expectation awakened from age to age in the heart of the men of Israel by the word in which he has caused us to hope ? Have we followed cunningly devised fables, in reference to the future coming and power of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glory that is to follow his sufferings ? Does not the heart of every true Christian desire a revelation to his soul and in his heart of that glory that shone around the traveler to Damascus, above the brightness of the mid-day sun, even though it should dazzle his eyes to temporary blindness to all earthly things, and entrance his heart away from all earthly ambition ? And with such a manifestation, would not each one say, " Henceforth let no man " or earthly desire or unbelieving fear " trouble me ; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus ? " And would not each one afterwards, in a sweeter sense of its glory than ever, be able to say, " The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me ; " — " I am

crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” Would not this be the beginning of the end ? If so, we ask any one, when and where might we expect the beginning of this new era, if not now and here ? Not, indeed, with a rushing mighty wind, to shake the place where we are sitting together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, or visible tongues of fire disperted to each of us here assembled ; not in the earthquake or whirlwind, but in “ the still small voice,” speaking to the secrecy of every spirit from the seat of power. “ Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel ; I will help thee.” Oh ! Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, ascended, exalted, almighty Redeemer ! speak, for we thy servants wait to hear. Our eyes and ears are unto thee. We stand still to see the salvation of God !

“ A rill, a stream, a torrent flows,
But pour a mighty flood ;
Oh ! sweep the nations, shake the earth,
Till all proclaim thee God ! ”

And what better blessing could we desire for all our brethren in heathen and nominally Christian lands, than such a baptism as we have described as desirable for ourselves. To make them strong and successful, they need faith in the infinite resources here pledged for our assistance in the great work in which we are all engaged ; we at home, and they as our organs and representatives abroad ; faith in the living, personal, constant presence and power of Him who says, “ I will help thee.” We do not mean to say that our brethren do not believe, that

they have no faith. Ah, their faith, shown by their works and sacrifices, is enough to shame us who profess to honor and serve the same Master! But they need, as well as we, more vivid realizations of these exceeding great and precious promises, and fuller appropriations of the infinite fullness of his power. They need the faith that lived in the apostles, and made radiant with glory the ancient martyrs ; that strengthened Luther to stand almost single-handed, a conscious worm, against his mighty and mountain-like antagonists; the faith of Enoch and Noah and Abraham and Moses of old. They need a faith that would enable them to see, as did Isaiah, the Lord high and lifted up, and his train filling the temple, and heaven and earth full of his glory ; or as Stephen, the Son of Man our Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, at the right hand of power ; or as John in his exile, alone and isolated, a Lamb as it had been slain from the foundation of the world, in the midst of the throne and the four living creatures and the four-and-twenty elders and the innumerable company of angels. They need a faith that would open to their view the armies of heaven on white horses, and Him who leads them, having on his vesture and on his thigh, that vesture dipt in blood, "King of kings and Lord of lords," his eyes as a flame of fire, and on his head many crowns, to compensate them for the songs they have forsaken for the love of Jesus, and cause them to hear the heavenly harpings and seven-fold hallelujahs within the veil and on the sea of glass, and that great voice, saying, Now is come salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God, even the power of the

Anointed One. If simultaneously one and all, wherever scattered through the field, in distant continents, and surrounded by different mountains, they were enabled to exercise such a faith, would they not with a new spirit go forth to thresh the mountains, till in the name of the Master they had set judgment in the earth, and gained glory to God ?

Could this place be constituted by God at this moment a centre of electric communication, whence in an inappreciable lapse of time our wishes and feelings could be transmitted to every station under heaven, what better message could we dispatch than that which, from the seat of power, sealed by the signature of the Holy Ghost, we have received and been considering to-night ! Well ! there is a centre of spiritual influence, the right hand of God where Christ sitteth, where with more than electric rapidity we may send our wishes and prayers, and whence he can distribute them with equal speed all around the globe. O Lord, Holy One of Israel, our Redeemer ! say to all our brethren, with almighty energy, " Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel." Creator of the ends of the earth, who faintest not, neither art weary ! say to all who are in sight of the great mountains, " I will help thee. Ye are worms, indeed, a few men surrounded by mountains of error and prejudice and power ; but ye shall thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and make the hills like chaff ; and the whirlwind shall carry them away ; and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and glory in the Holy One of Israel."

In the light of these assurances we would say to our brethren, in the gladness of anticipated triumph, Go out once more, and survey the mountains. Take again, with your best instruments, their altitude, dimensions and strength. Realize fully their immensity. Then look again at your weakness and paucity of numbers; and when sense and reason would quail and stagger, hear the voice, like many waters, saying, "Fear not," "I will help thee." It is the voice of the Lord God of Elijah, yea, the Lord God omnipotent.

And we would say, further, while you go up to the work, we will get ourselves up also to the high mountains of communion with God. Like Aaron and Hur, while Israel and Amalek were engaged in battle, we will try to pray that your faith fail not, and that your success may be proportioned to the greatness of the promise. Here, in the sight of God, we pledge ourselves that we will help you to the extent of our ability, as the Lord gives to every one. We will work together with you in our prayers and sympathies! These ministers will remember you in the pulpit and the closet. These Lydias and Marys, mothers and sisters left behind, these Abrahams who have willingly offered their Isaacs and lovelier idols on the altar, will not forget you. The friends who loved and prayed and wept together, at the academy, the college and the seminary, now separated from you by oceans and continents, still one in an affection which laughs at intervening obstructions, one in faith and aim and purpose, we will not forget you, we will bow our knees to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the

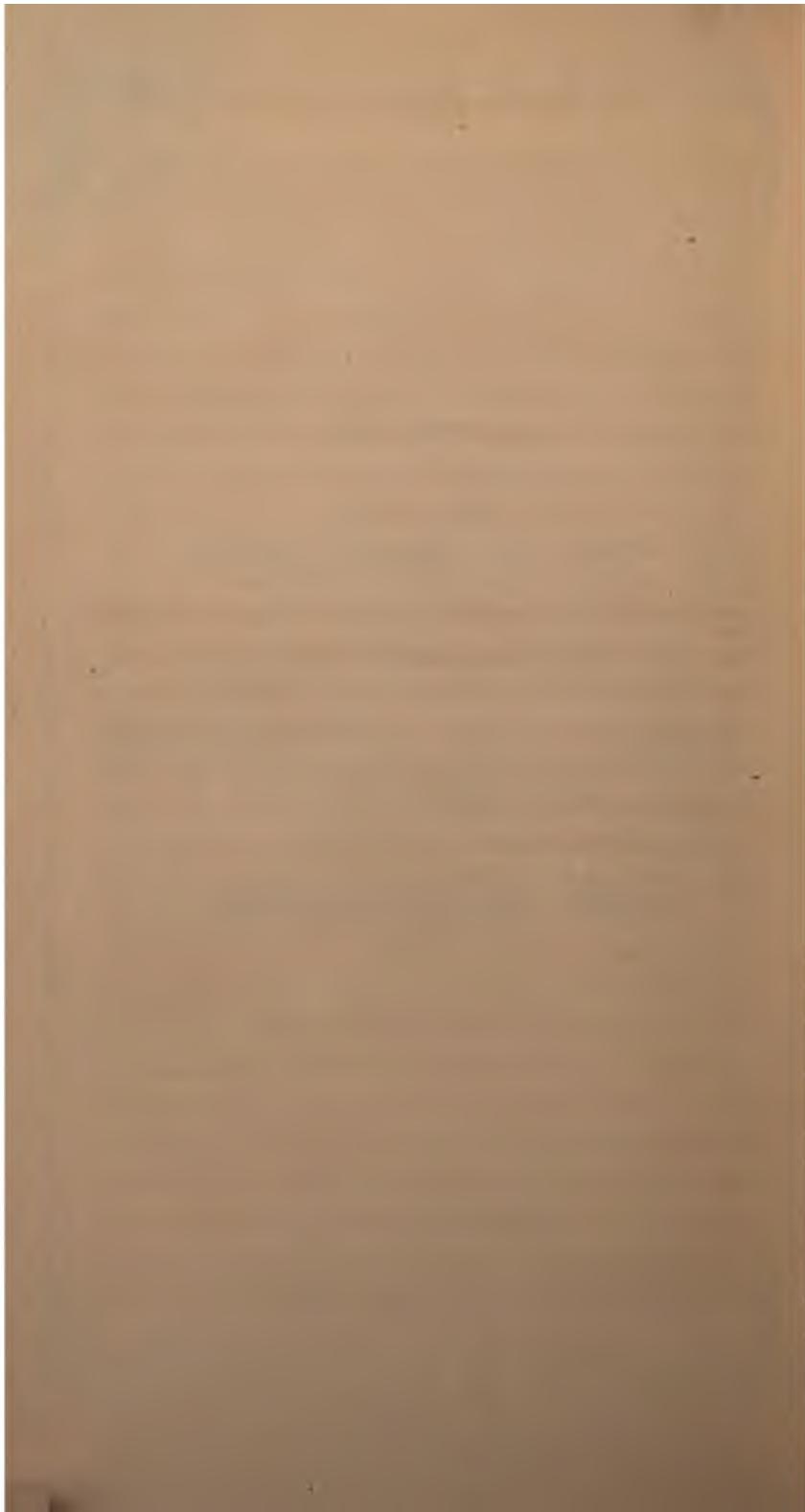
whole family in heaven and earth is named, and will make mention of you in our supplications without ceasing to Him, who is accessible alike from Asia, Africa, Europe and America. Animated by these glorious promises, we will all try to do our part, whether we be eyes or feet, or ears or hands, whether we have the word of wisdom or knowledge or faith in this glorious enterprise, an enterprise which God approves and has appointed, which angels are watching, and which, brethren, as the Lord liveth and our souls live, is to succeed. Is he a man that he should lie, or the son of man that he should repent? Hath he said it? He will do it. Hath he spoken? It will come to pass. Heaven and earth may pass away; but not one jot or tittle that he hath spoken, shall fail to be fulfilled. O Lord, we would believe; help thou our unbelief. Increase our faith, our love, our zeal, till by our instrumentality or that of others better taught and trained the work is done, and heaven and earth shall echo, "Hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." AMEN!

Rev. Dr. Bacon's Sermon

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS,

PREACHED AT TROY, NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 7, 1852.



The Relation of Faith to Missions. (6)

A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT TROY, NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 7, 1852,

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AT THEIR

FORTY-THIRD ANNUAL MEETING.

BY LEONARD BACON, D. D.
OF NEW HAVEN, CONN.

BOSTON:
PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN, 42 CONGRESS ST.
1852.



SERMON.

IN other meetings of this great missionary convocation, business is to be transacted, reports are to be presented and discussed, and various inquiries are to be prosecuted respecting our plans and methods of evangelization. But this evening we meet exclusively for the higher purpose of worship and Christian edification. We are here that we may bring ourselves, with our great work upon us, into the immediate and felt presence of Him who heareth prayer, and that we may receive from the ministration of his word some appropriate lesson of instruction, admonition or encouragement. He who by your appointment, fathers and brethren, speaks to you on this occasion, is required to speak not as a debater to aid the progress of discussion and the dispatch of business, not as a lecturer to unfold the philosophy, or to trace out the incidental bearings of the missionary work, but simply as a minister of the word of God. Yet, on the other hand, it is

not needful, in such a presence as this, to insist on those first principles which every pastor has occasion to inculcate, from time to time, when he urges upon his flock that great command of the Redeemer to his followers, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." These fathers and brethren, coming together from so many different regions of our common country, for the very purpose of conference on the progress of the work which Christ by that command committed to his followers, and of devising the methods and the means by which its progress may be promoted ; these missionaries, returned from so many distant lands with their reports of what God has wrought, and with their plea for help in the work to which their life is consecrated and in which they hope to die ; these youthful sons and daughters of the church, self-devoted to the same toils and perils, and looking forward to the time when they too shall go far hence to the Gentiles,—what shall the preacher say to them ?

Brethren, what we want at such an hour as this, is to remember and realize the true nature and character of the work in behalf of which we are assembled, and which is the bond of our union. We want to realize what kind of a work it is for which this missionary institution exists, and what the grand distinction is between this and all secular undertakings. I have, therefore, selected as the words of Holy Writ, which are to guide and fix the meditations of this hour, that testimony from the

Apostle Paul, so descriptive of the Christian life in its simplest yet sublimest aspect,—

2 CORINTHIANS, v. 7.

WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT.

The phraseology of the text needs no explanation, certainly not in such an assembly as this. Nor need I dwell upon the exposition of these words as descriptive of the Christian life in general. He whom Christ hath taught, and whom the Spirit of God hath awakened and illuminated, is a *believer*, that is, he accepts the reality of things beyond the reach of sense. To him the life and immortality which Christ has brought to light, and the eternal salvation of which Christ is the author, are not dreams or uncertainties, but substantial realities. To him, the presence, the government, the character of God ; to him, the work of redemption and the glory of the Redeemer ; to him, the intrinsic beauty of holiness, the intrinsic evil of sin, and the connection which God has established between transgression and retribution ; to him, the exceeding great and precious promises, by which men fallen and polluted are raised to a participation in “the divine nature,”—are the great realities of his existence. In his view, the things that are seen, the things of earth and time, the objects of selfish and sensual affection, are overshadowed by the surpassing and substantial grandeur of things invisible and eternal. To walk by faith and not by sight, is characteristic

of every Christian who does not wholly dishonor the Christian name.

What I propose, is to speak of the missionary enterprise under this aspect. Inasmuch as it is distinctively Christian, it is essentially an enterprise and work of faith. So far as it is simply and truly what it professes to be, the enterprise of converting the world to Christ, it must needs derive its motives, its supports and encouragements, its steadfast hope, from beyond the sphere of the things which are seen, and must look habitually at the things which are unseen and eternal. In order to sustain itself, it must walk by faith, not by sight. This is the point to be illustrated in the present discourse. How is it that, in this work of going into all the world and preaching the gospel to every creature, we walk by faith?

I. We are constrained to walk by faith in this work of evangelizing the nations, because the enterprise presupposes, as its starting point, a full conviction that the gospel is a true revelation from God. Here our enterprise begins. If any ask us why we concern ourselves about the propagation of the gospel, our first and most comprehensive answer is, because the gospel is true. God who spake to the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son. In the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, we have a series of facts and testimonies in which God is revealed, and a way of salvation for sinners is laid open. In these holy records, things unseen are made known to us;

the veil is lifted, as it were, which hides eternity ; the relations of the soul to its Creator, and the ends for which it has its being, are made palpable to the conscience ; and men, receiving the testimony and believing it, become acquainted with God, not merely as an abstract philosophic theory which explains and harmonizes the phenomena of the universe, nor as the conclusion of an argument which they cannot logically resist ; not as a necessity of their intelligent and moral nature, nor as the objective creation of that mysterious yearning which must have something for the soul to fear and worship ; but as revealed through the medium of distinct and intelligible facts. We believe these facts ; we hold them as certainties, and therefore we undertake to publish them and to spread the knowledge of them among all nations. Our enterprise finds itself, in the first instance, on a firm confidence in "this faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners ;" for it is nothing else than the attempt to propagate that conviction through the world. Thus the missionary work, in the very simplest conception of it, is a work of faith. It does not walk by sight. It does not found itself upon the things that are seen. It accepts the gospel as a divine revelation to mankind. It rests upon the conviction that the gospel is truth of infinite moment to the world.

But there are also definite and particular views of things unseen, certain specific exercises of faith, by which this great work is justified, and which

sustain and encourage us in the enterprise. For example, to men who regard the matter only in the light of philosophy, our undertaking seems preposterous and impracticable, even on the supposition that the religion which we attempt to propagate is the true religion. ‘Christianity,’ they say, ‘is the religion of civilized and intellectual nations only. Its doctrines are such as exercise the loftiest and most cultivated intellects. Look at the theology taught in our schools, set forth in our confessions of faith, expounded in our pulpits ; how preposterous the notion of carrying such a theology to men of other races, to barbarous men, to men who have no power of grasping abstractions, and who have no conception of anything which does not strike their senses ! How preposterous the idea of carrying to painted warriors of the wilderness, to the tatooed islanders of the Pacific, to Hottentots or Tartars, that body of religious doctrines which is contained in Calvin’s Institutes or Hopkins’s System of Divinity ! How unreasonable the expectation, that such specimens of our common human nature will be brought to feel an interest in a religion made up of doctrines so elevated, so abstract, so difficult even to minds invigorated by the discipline of study and refined by civilized culture ! These degraded and barbarous races must first be subjected to some humanizing influence, and to some process of intellectual renovation, before they can receive the doctrines of Protestant Evangelical Christianity. Meanwhile they must be addressed

through the medium of their senses. They must have a religion of ceremonies. Give them pictures then, and crucifixes, for the culture and development of religious sensibility, instead of the doctrine of an invisible and spiritual God, who must be worshiped in spirit and in truth. Give them the mystic efficacy of the baptismal water, instead of the doctrine of regeneration. Give them the wafer duly consecrated, instead of the doctrine of justification by faith. Give them the easy and salutary lesson of subjection to priestly authority, instead of appeals to judgment and conscience, and the doctrine of immediate and personal responsibility to God. And when they shall cease to be barbarians, when they shall have attained to some higher mark on the scale of intellectual and moral development, then they will be capable of a more spiritual religion.'

Such, very naturally, are the reasonings of those who, while they admit the truth of the Christian system in general, regard the propagation of the gospel in no higher light than that of philosophical speculation. The answer to all such reasonings is, that in thus undertaking to convert the world to Christ, we walk by faith, not by sight. For,

II. This missionary work is a work of faith, inasmuch as it assumes, not only that the gospel is true, and therefore ought to be published through the world, but also that the gospel is adapted to the universal need of human nature, and is therefore capable of being universally propagated. In other

words, the principle on which Paul acted, and which gave him courage to preach the gospel at Rome, is the principle which makes us ready to preach the same gospel, in all the world, to every creature. The principle is this, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." The gospel, when fairly exhibited by patient teaching, and by its natural and unostentatious showing of itself in the form of living character, can make its way into the most benighted human mind, and can become effectual to touch the latent springs of sensibility in the most degraded and uncultured soul. The mere philosopher, in his speculations on the propagation and progress of Christianity, is prone to forget that the matter of the Christian religion, as it is first proposed to attention and to faith, is not abstract or scientific, but distinctively historical, and is accordingly level to every apprehension. Is there any land or language in which the simple historic religion of the Bible cannot be made intelligible? The story of the creation and the apostacy; the story of the world's wickedness and of the world's destruction by the deluge; the long and eventful story of the people whom God chose for his own, whom he guarded and taught and nurtured, and who requited his bounty with so much unthankfulness and disobedience; in a word, the comprehensive story in which all the lessons of the Old Testament are involved, is everywhere intelligible;

and wherever that story finds its way, there the idea of God's true character begins to be shaped in the mind, and those sensibilities which are essential to the knowledge of sin and of salvation from sin, begin to be developed. The story of Jesus Christ, "God manifest in the flesh ;" the story of Bethlehem and Nazareth, and of him in whom dwelt all the fullness of the godhead bodily while yet he had not where to lay his head ; the story of Gethsemane and of Calvary ; the story of the crucifixion, and of that new sepulchre, and of that rising from the dead, and of that going up to reign in the invisible glory ; that story can be told in every language, and there is no human soul so degraded as to be incapable of learning from it the mystery of godliness. Wherever the gospel story goes, carrying with it the entire historical religion of the Old and New Testaments, there the human soul awakes from the lethargy of even the profoundest ignorance ; there the mind begins to inquire and meditate on things that are infinite and eternal ; there the vast problems of our mysterious existence, over which philosophy wearies itself in vain, begin to receive attention and to find their solution ; there the living oracles, explored and studied, give out a light that shines through all the realms of thought ; there the sublimest doctrines of the Christian revelation, the doctrines that underlie the story of redemption and are incorporated with it, will have their place in the experience of believers, and while speculation is baffled with their vastness, faith will

grasp them as realities. This is the adaptedness of the gospel to the universal need of human nature. It lies beyond the ken of any philosophy, that does not know the power as well as the form of godliness. But this we take for a first principle, when we undertake to preach the gospel to every creature. In the comprehensiveness of our enterprise, as in the fellowship of the redeemed, “there is neither Greek nor Jew, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free ;” for our work presupposes that as Christ died for all, so wherever there is a soul with human faculties and sensibilities, there is in that soul a capacity of being moved by the story of Christ and him crucified. Thus we walk by faith, not by sight.

There is another aspect of the missionary work, which does not present itself to any but a believing mind. Admitting that the body of facts and doctrines, called Christianity, is true, the man who contemplates the question of its progress in no other light than that of human speculation, will naturally argue that this religion, making its way in the world as a system of thought and belief, must make its way under the same conditions and chances with any other body of opinions equally sustained by evidence ; and that it will be liable to be overwhelmed and even extinguished, in some of those great and often unaccountable mutations which make up so much of human history. No religion, as yet, has ever become universal. All religions, whatever measure of truth they have had in them, have been liable

to revolution and decay. One system of thought and faith has been superseded by another, which in its turn has passed away ; nor are such changes always for the better. Christianity itself emerged, at its origin, from a quarter from which no great revolution could have been expected ; and who can tell that some new system may not come forth, from some source not now dreamed of, and triumph over Christendom ? To all such reasonings, the mind that thinks in accordance with that faith which is the evidence of things not seen, has a conclusive answer. For,

III. The undertaking to convert the world to Christ is a work of faith, inasmuch as it rests on the basis of Christ's commission and promises to his disciples.

If we went forth to such an enterprise as this, unsent—if the work were simply, and in all respects, a voluntary undertaking of our own—if we were acting under no guidance other than our own wisdom, and under no authority other than our own will—we could have no assurance of success. But we remember, for our encouragement, that the church of Christ, in the sense in which we are laboring for its extension, is not a merely human institution. Every particular church—every organized and governed local society of Christian worshipers—however conformed to scriptural principles and models, is, in one view, a human organization ; there is no certainty, no divine pledge, that its candlestick will not be removed, or that its light

will not become darkness. Any definite confederation of churches, under whatever system of ecclesiastical laws, is a human arrangement; it may live and flourish, and be filled from age to age with the light of a pure and saving gospel; or, on the other hand, it may become corrupt, it may apostatize from the truth, it may perish and be dissolved. But there is a church, which has no parochial or national boundaries, and which is defined by no human regulations or arrangements,—the Church of the living God, “built on the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone;”—the divine institution which Christ announced to his disciples when he said, “On this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” In this sense of the word, the church is universal and immortal; it is the goodly fellowship of the apostles, the noble army of Christ’s witnesses, the commonwealth of the saints, the glorious community of which Christ is the living head, and which includes all those in every age and clime, whom faith unites to their Redeemer. It is in this sense of the word, and not in any narrow, local, national, or sectarian sense, that we are laboring to extend the church. The coming of the kingdom of God—that is, the extension of the church considered as the universal commonwealth of the redeemed—is what we pray for, what we labor for; and in this work we act under Christ’s commission and with the assurance of his presence. It is his work; he is in it, the Captain

of our salvation ; he, personally though invisibly present, is leading his hosts from conquering to conquer ; and “ the gates of hell ”—the councils and enterprises of Death and Hades—shall never triumph over him.

Is not Christ with us in this enterprise ? If he is not, all our faith is vain, and our hope also is vain. If he is not with us, personally with us—our guide, our strength, and the assurance of our success—what dependence can there be upon his testimonies ? The doctrine of Christ’s continued and unfailing presence in his church—in the universal spiritual church, which is his body, “ the fullness of him who filleth all in all ”—is one of the most explicit lessons of the New Testament. What is that doctrine ? Christ himself, in almost the only discourse of his which seems expressly to anticipate the organized association of his disciples under any distinct form of religious polity, says, “ Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I, in the midst of them.” [Matt. xviii. 20.] So, when he speaks to his disciples of his departure, and promises to give them another Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth, he adds, “ I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you.” [John xiv. 18 ; see also the following verses.] “ Ye shall see me.” “ Ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” “ He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.” “ If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will

come to him, and make our abode with him." Such were the promises and assurances which our Savior gave before his crucifixion. See now the fulfillment of the promise. He dies and is buried, and on the third day he is "declared to be the Son of God, with power, by the resurrection from the dead." On that third day, and afterwards from time to time for the space of forty days, he manifests himself to his desponding and incredulous disciples; they see his human form; they hear his human voice; their intercourse with him is renewed; and thus his living, personal presence in his church, becomes, to them not merely a matter of expectation, but a matter of fact; not merely a matter of faith resting upon the promises he had given them, but a matter testified to them by their outward senses. He shows himself, now, to a solitary weeper in the gray morning twilight of that first day of the week on which he rose; now to two disciples walking together, and talking with downcast hearts of the things which had happened. Once and again, especially on the first day of the week, the disciples are assembled in an upper chamber, with the doors shut for fear of their enemies; and lo! suddenly, there he is in the midst of them, according to his promise. Thus, by these repeated manifestations, and by the manner in which he manifests himself, he makes them familiar with the fact, not of his resurrection only, but of his constant though invisible presence with them. He has not left them orphans, but has come to them. The world seeth him no more, but they see him. It is only to

them, and not to the world, that he thus manifests himself. He is with them, and with them only. He loves them ; and they grow strong and joyous in the consciousness that he is with them, a living and mighty presence, invisible and unknown to the world that has rejected him. At last, after some forty days of frequent intercourse with them by these visible manifestations, he is “ taken up,” and passes finally out of their sight. But before he thus withdraws from their sight and from the cognizance of every outward sense, he gives them a renewed and explicit commission to attempt the propagation of his gospel through the world, and he renews the promise that in that work he will be unfailingly present with them. “ All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and lo ! I am with you alway even to the end of the world.” [Matt. xxviii. 18-20.] What was the meaning of that promise given in those circumstances, given in such a connection with his final departure out of their sight ? It was as if he had said, Ye shall see me no more with the outward eye ; these manifestations of my presence are sufficient, as evidence of my resurrection from the dead, and of my mediatorial power on earth and in heaven ; and henceforth my presence will no more be cognizable to sense, yet I am with you alway, even to the end of the world. “ So then, after the

Lord had spoken to them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God ; and they went forth and preached everywhere, *the Lord* working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." [Mark xvi. 19, 20.] In some sense then,—in some sense distinct from the general doctrine of the divine omnipresence,—it is a doctrine of the New Testament that Christ is always present with his church ; always present with his believing followers in their consultations and enterprises for his cause, though only two or three are gathered together ; always present, especially in the work of preaching the gospel to every creature. However we may attempt to expound this doctrine, to define its consistency with our philosophy, to guard it against the perversions of enthusiasm and of superstition, or to bring it into the form of a logical and scientific statement, we must take heed that we do not explain it away, or paralyze its inspiring potency on the believing mind.

Our enterprise, then, of spreading the gospel through the world, is not our own, but Christ's. It rests upon this great Christian fact,—the fact that the risen and reigning Savior lives in the life of his church, reigns in its affection and fidelity, and conquers in its progress. Christ is with us in this work as really ; his power, his love, his guardianship, are as really with us ; his sympathy in our vicissitudes, and his interest in our success and ultimate victory, are as real, as if the sacred form that

was so often exhibited to the adoring gaze of his disciples before the day of his ascension, were visible among us from age to age,—as if the same voice which uttered the Sermon on the Mount, which prayed at Gethsemane, which groaned at Calvary, and which gave out its parting accents on the eastern slope of Olivet, were heard to-day in our assemblies. Faith realizes that the work is Christ's; that his commission is its warrant; and that his presence in it is the assurance of its ultimate success. There may be times of discouragement; defeat may follow upon defeat; the enemy may come like a flood in his hour and in the power of darkness; but, knowing that Christ hath sent us and is with us, we will not despair, for "by faith, not by sight," is the word upon our banners. The waves may roar, and men's hearts may fail them for fear; but Christ is with us in the ship; all that is hazarded is his; and when the wind and the storm cease to subserve his interest and to fulfill his word, the voice of his power shall awe them into silence.

But we are already approaching another aspect of the missionary work, and one which deserves to be, in its turn, distinctly regarded. To a mind which looks at the subject only in a theoretical view, and in the lights of merely human wisdom, the prodigious disproportion between our enterprise and our resources, between the end at which we aim and the means by which we hope to attain that end, may seem to convict us of enthusiasm, not to

say absurdity. Our field is the world, a world that lieth in wickedness ; and what are we and what are our resources, that we should undertake the work of extending through this whole world the kingdom and dominion of the Redeemer ? All sorts of hindrances and obstacles are in our way. How large a portion of mankind are sunk in utter barbarism ! How profound is the darkness of popular ignorance in the greater part of even the civilized world ! How adverse to human progress, and especially to the influence of the gospel, are almost all existing governments ! How much of injustice and organized wickedness is everywhere wrought into the very structure of society ! How strong too are the diverse systems of false religion which cover the earth as with the shadow of death ! how strong in their antiquity, in their association with government, in the wealth and the craft of their various priesthoods, and in their connection with the daily outward and inward life of the nations they enslave ! And what resources have we for the conquest of a world like this ? In one way of viewing things, the contributions made for the spread of the gospel through the world, may seem quite considerable. Perhaps half a million of dollars, or even more, is annually contributed in the United States for the various departments of the foreign missionary work as carried on by different Christian organizations. Perhaps not less than three times that amount is annually contributed for the same work by the churches of Great Britain. Such are our material

resources for the enterprise of publishing the gospel in the translation of its written records, and of preaching the gospel by the living voice, in every language and to every people under heaven. If such resources seem large to us, if they seem in any measure adequate to the end in view, it is enough to remember that a single year of war, like our own late war for the conquest of Mexico, involves more expenditure of treasure and of life than the contributions of a generation, at the present rate, for the conversion of the world. What are these few hundred men and women, scattered here and there among the countless millions of the unevangelized in Turkey, Persia, India, China, Africa and the Islands? Can they revolutionize governments and emancipate the nations? Can they demolish the fabrics which the superstition of ages has erected and consolidated? Can they produce any where any permanent effect?

Such doubts and objections are natural, whenever the mind falls into an unbelieving mood of thought. The answer with which we meet them—the only conclusive answer—is that in this work we walk by faith, not by sight. Or, putting the answer into the form adapted to this particular class of objections, we say,

IV. Our faith, in taking up and pursuing the work of the world's conversion, rests upon God's revealed plan and counsel concerning the world's redemption. In other words, the missionary work, in the true spirit and meaning of it, believes, and is

sustained by the belief, that the entire providence of God in this world, including all the special outpourings of his Spirit from time to time, is conducted with reference to the subjection of the world to Christ.

The view which recognizes God's redeeming and restoring work as involved in the arrangements of his providence, and developed along the track of ages past, is the Christian view of history. Without Christ and his mission—without Christ's conflict with the powers of darkness, and his final and pre-destined victory over all his enemies—without Christ's kingdom, spreading in the world from age to age, and ultimately filling the world with righteousness and peace and joy,—the history of this world is only a dark and tangled maze. Without the knowledge of Christ, and of God's counsel concerning the kingdom and work of Christ, there is no clue to guide the inquirer through the endless labyrinth. But going up into the mount of vision with the prophets of God, and there beholding Christ transfigured and glorified, and thence looking forth upon the ages which history has chronicled, we see events in their connection with God's government of the world and with the designs which he is pursuing, and lo ! the "mighty maze" is not "without a plan."

This recognition of the method and system of God's universal providence, is the Christian view of the world as it lies before us, and of the events now passing into history. To the eye of faith, Christ is

continually the central figure in the ever changing world-panorama. God's decree concerning his anointed King, [Ps. ii. 7-9,] "Thou art my Son ; this day have I begotten thee : ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession ; thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel"—stands unversed ; and all the progress of events is the working of God's providence to bring to pass that irreversible decree.

This, too, is the Christian view of what is yet to be. The light of prophecy from ancient time streams on, beyond the present, into the remotest future. Christ, in his mediatorial work of glory—Christ, in his kingdom among men—Christ, subduing and renewing all things, and going on with ceaseless progress to restore the ruin caused by the world's apostasy from God, is in all coming time no less than in the ages past, the centre in the system of universal providence. Around him all events however fortuitous they may seem, and all influences however adverse in their nature and their immediate bearing, have their places in a due subordination to the plan which he is executing. And as time performs its cycles, all things move on with him toward the predestined consummation.

"Thus heavenward all things tend ; for all were once,
Perfect, and all must be at length restored.
So God has greatly purposed, who would else
In his dishonored work himself endure
Dishonor, and be wronged without redress."

See then how far we are from depending on our own means and resources, as if they were adequate to the work of subduing the world to Christ. The very grandeur of the undertaking requires us to walk by faith, not by sight. We walk by faith in this great fact of the Christian religion, the fact of God's purpose to bring the whole world, in the fullness of time, under the dominion of his Son. All our plans and endeavors, all our hopes of success, are grounded on our confidence in that great scheme of providence which he has been pursuing in all past ages, and which he will continue to pursue till the new earth shall be arrayed in more than all the beauty and bloom of the original paradise. Our work is simply that of serving God in the gospel of his Son. In order to the universal establishment of the kingdom which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, the gospel of the kingdom must be published everywhere; and the revealed method of God's operation for the completion of his great design, requires that the gospel shall be published not by miracle but by human instrumentality—published by the process of giving to all nations the translated record of the Divine revelation, and teaching all men to read and understand it for themselves—published by the living voice proclaiming the story of Christ and the message of divine invitation in every language and to every creature. This is the work to which God calls us as his servants, as the stewards whom he has intrusted with the gospel for the world, as the redeemed followers

of Christ. We are to publish the gospel every where as we have opportunity, to the extent of our resources, according to our best ability and skill; and the result is sure, because the result is his—his heart is fixed upon it; his immutable purpose has determined it. With the same word of prophecy with which he encouraged his people of old, when, few and feeble, they were building the holy city and the temple in the presence of their enemies, he now encourages us, [Zach. iv. 6, 7,] “ This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain; and he shall bring forth the headstone with shoutings, crying, Grace! grace unto it! ”

The work, then, is not ours alone, nor need we be dismayed at the slenderness of our resources, or at the obstacles that rise like mountains in our way. The work is God’s. All the ages groan and travail, as it were, in pain together, till it be accomplished. We are only standing in our lot, and doing the little that is assigned to us in our subordination to the grand design of the eternal providence. And if we would refresh and strengthen our faith in God as the author and finisher of this work, we have only to look back a little and remember what God hath wrought; we have only to look abroad upon the field as it is, and consider the present operation of his hands.

Think what was the position of the church, and

of the world, one hundred years ago. The church had passed through more than seventeen centuries of peril since the ascension of the Savior. Ages of persecution had passed over her, long ages of darkness, ages of bondage and consequent corruption ; while he, with whom one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day, had been slowly unfolding his designs and preparing the way for a new dispensation of his Spirit, a new era of light and of liberty. The dawn of that new era was just beginning to redden on the sky. A wide religious awakening, here and in Great Britain, was beginning to break up the cold rigidity of a prevalent formalism ; to counteract the growing tendency to materialism and infidelity that had risen out of corruption of morals, and had become established in the accepted philosophy of the age ; and to assert and exhibit the vital and irrepressible freedom of spiritual Christianity. The germ, as it were, the promise, the possibility of all modern missionary enterprises, was in the evangelism of Edwards and of Bellamy ; in the praying, groaning, yet exulting self-sacrifice of Brainerd ; in the tongue of cloven fire that sat on Whitefield ; in the apostolic fervor and daring of the Wesleys. Looking out from that point in the past, survey the world as it then was, and estimate what resources and capabilities were in the church as it then was for the conversion of the world. Everywhere in Christendom, with no considerable exception, the word of God was in some sense bound. Everywhere, not excepting the

Puritan colonies of New England, the state undertook to regulate and control, at least to some extent, the institutions of religion and the preaching of the word of God. And what were the great political sovereignties that then held dominion over the world? One hundred years ago, the empire which made its boast that on its dominions the sun never set, was the empire of Spain—superstitious, cruel, papal Spain, drunk with the blood of saints. One hundred years ago, all this western hemisphere, with the exception of the few and feeble English colonies scattered along the Atlantic coast from Maine to Georgia, was under the sovereignty of the great papal powers of Europe. One hundred years ago, how insignificant in the eye of statesmanship, how completely without influence or weight in the affairs of nations, how little regarded in the calculations of commerce, how unknown to history, how unnoticed on the map of the world, were those few English settlements, now grown into a union of free commonwealths, which, while it awes all thrones with its more than imperial power, and agitates the nations with the omens of its destiny, is working out before the whole human race a new illustration of what the gospel is in its relations to the renovation of the world. One hundred years ago, the Mohammedan power in Turkey had hardly begun to wane; the Mohammedan empire in India had not fallen; the great pagan empires beyond the Ganges, Burmah, and Siam, and China, were as inaccessible to evangelical effort as Japan is now.

Picture to yourself the world as it was no longer ago than when David Brainerd was girding himself to his work, and then look at it as we now portray it on our maps for the monthly concert of prayer, dotted on every continent and ocean and in every darkest and most barbarous land, with the luminous points of evangelical influence. Who planned, who brought to pass this great change? What hath God wrought?

What is God working now? It is not for us to cast down the thrones of oppression that stand in our way. It is not for us to unchain the enslaved and struggling races of mankind so that they may receive the gospel. It is not for us to open highways of commerce and of travel across the ocean and into the wildernesses. God is doing all that in the development of his providence. And more than all that, he pours out his Spirit to renew the face of the earth, to kindle life when all was death; and the seed which we sow so sparingly and with so little faith, springs up and waves like Lebanon. O what is God working at this moment for that great cause which gathers us in this assembly! In how many a darkened mind is the new consciousness of relations to the invisible and eternal world, beginning at this moment to kindle into light under the influence of his Spirit. In how many a barbarous language, are the redeemed and renewed from among the heathen singing at this moment with melody in their hearts unto God! The universal providence of that almighty love to which we min-

ister, prepares our way and leads us forth. The Spirit that moved on the primeval chaos, bringing forth out of that confusion, order, beauty, life and blessedness, is also the Author of that new creation toward which all things in this disordered world are tending, and in which we have our humble work to do. He who sent his Son that the world might be redeemed, will not fail to send his Spirit also, that the world may be renewed. This confidence sustains us. Without it we could have no courage for so arduous and vast an enterprise.

Let me say, in conclusion, that the subject which has been so inadequately represented in this discourse, illustrates the mutual relation between the foreign missionary work and the spiritual health of the churches. The work, as a work of faith, grounding itself from first to last on the reality of things not seen, deriving its encouragements and all its vital motives from the revealed word of God, calls faith into exercise, and invigorates by activity the principle of faith. And faith, living and active, inspiring high sympathies, prompting to apostolic enterprises, transfusing Christian truth into the affections, and translating it into action, while it feeds on the truth as it is in Jesus, and can have no other aliment, is also conservative of truth, and is its best and surest guardian. Let us press onward then in the work of subduing the world to Christ. Whatever hindrances, at home or abroad, may obstruct its progress; whatever temporary disasters may come upon it; however the blessing of

success, upon one field of labor and another, may seem to linger on its way from heaven, let us work on as workers with God ; for we cannot abandon this enterprise, or relax our efforts in it, without renouncing the faith in which we have begun, and losing our hold on things invisible and eternal. We cannot grow slothful or faint in such a work as this, without sinking into a spiritual apathy that shall spread itself through the churches, from land to land, till all the power and life of godliness shall be extinguished, and nothing shall remain of truth or of devotion but cold and stony forms.

So, on the other hand, if the life and power of godliness are permitted to decline in our churches ; if thus the truth, the pure gospel of Christ, is obscured by dead traditions, and superseded by barren speculations ; if our churches become worldly and corrupt, losing at once the doctrine and spirit of Christ, all our enterprises for the conversion of the world will fail. The work is all, from first to last, a work of faith ; and where faith, as a principle, a spiritual affection, a living force in the hearts of the redeemed, grows faint and cold, there all the nerves of feeling and of action in this work are first relaxed, then paralyzed. Oh for the presence of the Holy Spirit in all our hearts, in all our churches ! Oh for the unfailing presence of that promised Comforter, teaching us all things, bringing all things to our remembrance—all Christ's glories, all his testimonies, all his promises, taking of the things of Christ and showing them to us ! Oh for that

inward and immediate intercourse with God, which brings the soul into harmony with truth, and which makes the truth luminous. Oh for those illuminations beaming on the soul whose life is hid with Christ in God; those earnest apprehensions of divine and eternal things; that intense appreciation of the gospel in the simplicity and grandeur of its doctrines, before which the formalism of dead traditions and the formalism of irreverent speculation are, both alike, rebuked and subdued! Then should we arise to this great work with a more self-renouncing zeal, and with a more steadfast and inspiring confidence. Then would the word of God run and be glorified. Then should we see "the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven." Then would there be heard, ere long, over all the renewed and blooming earth, a voice from heaven, saying, "The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God."



REV. DR. ADAMSS SERMON

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR
FOREIGN MISSIONS,

PREACHED AT CINCINNATI, OHIO,

OCTOBER 4, 1853.



Christianity designed for the World, and the World
designed for Christianity.

A

S E R M O N ,

PREACHED AT CINCINNATI, OHIO, OCTOBER 4, 1853,

BEFORE THE

**AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.**

AT THEIR

FORTY-FOURTH ANNUAL MEETING.

**BY WILLIAM ADAMS, D. D.
OF NEW YORK CITY.**

**BOSTON :
PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN, 42 CONGRESS ST.
1854.**

S E R M O N .

MATTHEW xiii. 38.

THE FIELD IS THE WORLD.

WHEN Oliver Goldsmith wrote his “Citizen of the World,” there is no evidence that he had any comprehension of the religious idea involved in the title chosen for that captivating production. Every Christian is a true cosmopolite. The world is one ; and for this large and scattered family God has revealed but one religion. When we assert the imperative claims of the Christian religion to universal faith and obedience, many are disposed to evade the obligation by affirming that Christianity is only one of the many religions of the world ; that its historical origin is comparatively recent ; its geographical jurisdiction is and always has been very limited ; its practical influence, if not a failure, is certainly by no means commensurate with its vast pretensions ; and, last of all, that, as politics, the arts and sciences have each their appropriate and distinctive domain, so the gospel of Christ is but one of the many subordinate agencies of the world ; a kind of side play, whose proper province

is within a certain professional class, and whose field of display is the Sabbath, the church, the house of affliction, and the courts of death ; and because of this meagre induction, thousands absolve themselves from all obligation, either to receive or propagate the religion of the Son of God.

Christianity is not a mere afterthought, but an original project ; not an episode, but the main plot ; it does not belong prescriptively to the small strips of land here and there where its light now shines ; its field is the world, and its ultimate jurisdiction will be universal. As our belief on this subject is not a matter of theoretic calculation, or philosophic deduction, but of religious faith, we may expect to find in Christianity itself, its doctrines and its history, the promise and the proof of its universal prevalence. But what is Christianity ? Where is Christianity ? Not an aroma floating in the air. Not a soft and poetic sentiment playing through the imagination of the philanthropic. It is a historical existence, and is to be examined and judged in its own inspired and infallible records.

Assembled to-day on the beautiful banks of the Ohio, a thousand miles from the place where, forty years ago, this missionary association was organized, and thousands more from the spot where, eighteen hundred years ago, the Author of our religion gave the commission to evangelize the world ; cheered by the memory of past successes, and studious still of the methods by which we may bear the gospel of our Lord from river to river and from sea to sea, let us, first of all, go entirely back to the inspired

chronicles of our faith, and gather up some of the facts therein contained, bearing on that one sentiment to which we are publicly pledged,—“Christianity designed for the world, and the world designed for Christianity.”

The first fact to be mentioned is, that Christianity *asserts its own universality*; and this not incidentally, but as inherent in its first and vital principles. There is no authority and there can be no comfort in the Christian Revelation to me, as an individual, if that authority and that comfort extend not equally to all mankind. The gospel addresses us simply as men. It recognizes us only as citizens of the world. It knows no national distinction and no territorial boundaries. Its two central ideas are SIN and SALVATION; man has fallen, and for man has Christ died. The nations are many; but the world is one. Begin your genealogical pedigree where you will, in whatever portion of the earth’s surface, among whatever kindred or tribe, all will converge at last towards the first links of the chain which describe the beginning of our race: “who was the son of Adam—who was the Son of God.” It is the race of man, the whole race, that have felt the direful visitations of sin; and the offers of pardon and restoration are commensurate with the evils they would remedy. “*To the whole world,*” is the superscription upon the royal proclamation of amnesty and glad tidings. Question this universality in the gospel’s own structure and adaptation, and you quench the hopes which brighten your own path; since you are but one of a common race.

The Christian religion, moreover, is the *only* religion which asserts its own universality. The accomplished Reinhard has achieved a goodly service in the analysis which he has given of all the philosophies and religions of the world, in proof of the fact, that, prior to the commission given to the Eleven on the Mount of Ascension, the idea is not to be found of a religious system which claimed to be universal in its adaptation. When the Prophet of Mecca, ignorant of the fact authenticated by modern science, that there are parts of the habitable globe where the sun rises and sets but once for months in succession, incorporated in the Koran the practical precept, that the religious fasts to be observed by men should begin at the very instant the limb of the sun appeared above the horizon, and should be continued strictly until the same disappeared in the western sky, he not only proved the provincialism but the falsity of his religion. Nor was he the *only* instance in which, through the unconscious adhesions of things absurd and impossible, the ancient fable has found a sober verification ; the eagle, purloining meat from the altar of the gods, and perceiving not the coal of fire adhering thereto by which its own nest was to be consumed.

No sooner do we set forth this claim of Christianity to an universal range and authority, than we are met by an objection greatly urged by modern infidelity,—an objection which scoffs at all our religious propagandism, for it affirms the historical fact, that Christianity is only a recent introduction ;

that Jesus of Nazareth was not born until two-thirds of the world's age was passed, and that, as good men existed before his advent, under other forms of worship, it is absurd to claim that his religion is the only true and sufficient one for all men and for all times. An objection we admit well put, if we were allowed to forswear the fact recorded by inspiration, that Christianity did not begin in Bethlehem of Judea. It began in Eden; and among the many proofs that it is the one and only true religion which God has revealed is this, that it is the very oldest of all. Long before the Persian adored the sun, or the Chaldean bowed before the hosts of heaven, or the Egyptian framed his colossal altars and idolatries, did Christianity begin its veritable life and progress. Wonder not that the antagonists of the Christian system expend so much time and talent in proving what they affirm, the falsity and absurdity of the Jewish religion. Think not that it is a mere matter of biblical criticism, or philological lore, when so much pains are taken to eject the Epistle to the Hebrews from the inspired canon. Most warily has infidelity chosen its points for attack; and we frankly confess, that were we not fully fortified in the belief of the connection of the Jewish and Christian dispensations as together forming one substantial identity, the one religion revealed to man from heaven, there is no form in which our minds would be so open to skeptical intrusions concerning the necessity of embracing ourselves, and communicating to others, the Christian system as the only hope

of man, as that which Neology has assumed in its assaults upon the Jewish system. Therefore it is that inspiration has, to such a degree, exhausted its own skill and explicitness, in explaining to us the appurtenances and forms of the Patriarchal and Levitical worships. Those were not of human origin, like the tripod of the Grecian flamen, the Eleusinian mysteries, or the forms of Druidical worship. They were copied from the pattern shown to Moses in the Mount. Though now obsolete, yet they are not to be classed with the mummeries of false religions. It was Christianity which smoked in the first sacrificial victim that was offered outside the gates of forfeited Paradise. It was Christianity that was enshrined in that sacred ark which was borne across the brilliant sands of Syria, and between the crystal walls of the parted Jordan. It was Christianity that entered the Holy of Holies, in tabernacle and temple, with graven breast-plate and atoning blood. But it was Christianity not yet in its ripeness and readiness ; only in its promise and preparation. Christianity was there, just as whole harvests of grain are now included in the husks of that handful of corn which is yet to germinate ; just as immense forests were once enclosed within the shell and burr of the seed-nut from whence sprang growth and reproduction.

It is not incumbent on any human wisdom to explain why God appointed such length and slowness to the preparatory stages of revealed redemption. Why should summer insects measure the stupendous revolutions of the stars by the wheelings

of their own tiny flights? We, indeed, might refute objections alleged against this progressive development of Christianity, by appealing to all the analogies of nature, "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." Corn is not fit to be used for planting and reproduction while yet in the blade. And it is quite pertinent to our present argument concerning the universality of the Christian system, to remind ourselves that, though the revelation of Christianity began in the early dawn of history, yet its world-wide diffusion was not authorized until the fullness of time had come.

It is not an admission extorted from us reluctantly, but a patent fact to which, as studious of the ways of God, we call a special attention, that the typical institutions of Christianity were strictly local and stationary. It was not owing to human defects and unfaithfulness, that nothing was done for ages by way of propagating the true faith. This was in accordance with divine direction and interdict. The people chosen to be the depositaries of the one revelation from God, were isolated from the rest of the world by a thousand laws and limitations. Matrimonial alliances, out of their own nation, were strictly prohibited. To convert remote nations to their religion was not their vocation. The admission of proselytes from abroad, though permitted in certain cases, was guarded, according to the structure of their religious system, with the greatest caution. Everything tended to seclusion and concentration, rather than diffusion and extension.

It is of the utmost importance to be understood, that the Jewish system, notwithstanding its relations to the redemption of Christ, was as purely local as our court of common pleas. It was not designed for aggression at all. It had no agencies for propagandism. It was in no sense organized for extension into foreign parts. The high priest was a fixture. No itinerant service had he to perform in Moab or Idumea. No other man on earth was permitted to do what he was ordained of God to perform, and his service was to be rendered only within the solemn precincts of the temple. The sacred scrolls were in the custody of a particular order of men ; and the rites of the true religion could only be performed by a certain line of consecrated succession. Everything was arranged to preserve the one revealed faith unmixed and uncontaminated from the profane touch of the heathen.

Observe, at the same time, how the providential condition of the world was suited to this formative and infant state of revealed Christianity. The state of the earth was unfavorable to intercommunication. There were few facilities for travel and commerce. Early in the world's history, men had sought on the plains of Shinar to centralize wealth, population and empire. By a special act, God defeated their purpose, and separated them into distinct tribes and nations, by diversities of language. Everything tended to segregation. A range of mountains, a river, a sea, were sufficient barriers to national intercourse. What an immense trial of faith was it for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to

pass and repass between the Euphrates, the Jordan and the Nile, where now tourists from this western world find their holiday recreation. Both sacred and profane history abound with proofs of the separateness and solitariness of the nations. Homer is supposed to have lived at the very time that the splendors of the Jewish economy culminated at the court and the temple of Solomon. But the author of the *Odyssey* was entirely ignorant of countries within a few hours' sail of Greece. The Argonautic expedition is described as sailing up through the Hellespont and the Euxine, and returning by the Pillars of Hercules ; as if the sea of Azof were connected with the Atlantic Ocean. The author of the *Æneid*, describing his hero landing on the shores of Carthage by the inevitable event of shipwreck, relates the consternation which he felt in expectation of losing his life because a stranger and a foreigner.

While typical Christianity, for the sake of its own preservation and purity, was local and stationary, the world itself was retained in a condition suited to the purpose. Time advances, and striking changes occur simultaneously in both. The prophecies of the Hebrew faith are kindling into the morning ; all the rays of truth and hope are converging towards the advent of the Son of God ; and Christianity is approaching the days of her enlargement and completion. The old walls of partition are broken down. The gorgeous pile of symbolic architecture which crowned the top of Moriah, like an immense mould, was to be broken

to pieces ; and the spiritual fabric that had been cast therein was to be brought forth to the light. The Kings of the East, the appointed agencies of God, swept down from the Caucasus to the Mediterranean, like birds of prey, and spoiled the sanctities of the Holy City. God's chosen nation, so long preserved in their integrity and separation, are dispersed like the chaff by the whirlwind, and throne and temple vanish from the earth. The nations of the earth become infused and intermixed, passing and repassing in the jostlings and attritions of war, conquering and being conquered,—all in the order of inspired prediction,—until Christianity was ready for the world, when lo ! the world is made ready for Christianity !

When the embryo religion was yet in its needful seclusion and quiet, there had been secretly and slowly coming into life a new and masculine power, which was destined to change the face of the world. It began before Isaiah had fallen a victim to the rage of Manasseh ; before Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed, and Daniel, interpreting the finger of God, had announced the rise of successive dynasties. It had more than a hundred thousand inhabitants when Xerxes marshaled his hosts on the banks of the Hellespont. Its population had reached a quarter of a million, before Alexander the Great had subjugated the East by his tremendous exploits at Arbela and the Granicus. Rolling through its successive eras, ever tending to aggrandizement, like a swelling river, it at length absorbs in its own vast supremacy all the kingdoms

of the world. Sicily, Carthage, Epirus, Macedonia, Pergamos, Bithynia, Galatia, Pontus, Syria, Cappadocia, Egypt, Judea, Gaul and Britain, all became provinces and appendages of the Roman Empire. Never before was any dominion so distinguished by universality. Her consuls and her eagles, at the same time, were on the shores of Wales and the banks of the Tigris ; on the summits of the Carpathian mountains, and along the Arabian and Lybian deserts.

In this new phase and condition of the world, in one of the provinces of this universal empire, the Son of God was born, the Lamb of God was slain, and the gospel was ready for the world. For the first time, since the world was made, was the commission given to evangelize all nations. An end had come to everything typical and preparatory ; to everything local and exclusive. The Jew, as such, was to be known no more. To MAN is the gospel given. All mankind were now to share in privileges which hitherto had been reserved and restricted to a peculiar people. The early promise made to Abraham, in the dim dawn of the world, " All the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him," found its incipient fulfillment, when, standing on the slope of Olivet, on the morning of his ascension, the Son of God, radiant with the joys of his finished redemption, said to his disciples, " Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Hard was it for the best and bravest of their number to comprehend this universal quality of the faith they preached. Supernatural methods were put in requi-

sition to convince Peter himself, that the old distinction between clean and unclean was abrogated forever ; and when, obedient to the mission, he visited the house of Cornelius, Jewish prejudices were so strong that he was arraigned before a council at Jerusalem for preaching the gospel to a Gentile. One by one, the scales fell ; by little and little, the truth prevailed, till at last the glorious conviction was reached, that to be a Christian was more than to be a Jew ; and that in the length and breadth, height and depth of one universal faith, all the preceding distinctions of men were to be swallowed up forever. The tiny insects of the Pacific seas, building up the reefs which breast and break the surges of the ocean, the islands and continents on which vegetation rises and cities swarm with life, can have no anticipation of the magnificent results of their subaqueous architecture. No more had the successive emperors of Rome, in the play and passion of personal ambition, in the blind impulses of self-aggrandizement, any knowledge or imagination of the uses of their success ; but these arise out of the ocean depths of God's wisdom. Their military roads and bridges were built, their consulates and prefectures were established, and along these 'highways of the Lord' came bounding the footsteps of a free and beneficent Christianity.

With these combinations of the gospel's own nature, history and providential adaptations full in our minds, let us now inquire, for our own practical help and guidance, what were the agencies by which the religion of Christ received its first rapid

and general promulgation. These were of three kinds: the *miraculous*, the *organized*, and the *spontaneous*.

The *miraculous* was of temporary necessity, and having subserved this, was suspended. Using the word in its strict rhetorical sense, we say that the *presumption* at first was against the religion of the cross; that is to say, the ‘*onus probandi*’ was with those who first preached it in opposition to long established institutions.* That obligation was not evaded, but met; the author of our religion furnishing his disciples with the power of establishing their proofs through miraculous attestations. But now, after the long and eventful history of the Christian religion, the “burden of proof” is reversed; and if miracles are to be looked for at all, they must be demanded of those who would disprove this ancient, venerable and unshaken faith of the world. If it be retorted that, in other lands than our own, in the presence of the aged superstitions of heathenism, the “burden of proof” rests upon the Christian missionaries who invade them, we admit the fact, rejoicing that such men are deputed for the service as are fully competent and equipped to meet the demands with proofs and arguments, even though the original help of mira-

* According to the most correct use of the term, a “Presumption” in favor of any supposition, means, not (as has been sometimes erroneously imagined) a preponderance of antecedent probability in its favor, but such a *preoccupation* of the ground as implies that it must stand good till some sufficient reason is adduced against it; in short, that the *Burden of proof* lies on the side of him who would dispute it. There is a Presumption in favor of *every existing institution*.—*Whately's Rhetoric*, P. I. ch. iii. § 2.

cles is now entirely withdrawn. Christianity asks and expects no more miraculous assistance in her aggressions ; and we dismiss this original agency from our inventory of available forces with the single remark, that the miracles which were wrought by or in connection with the first teachers of Christianity, were all, without an exception, designed to aid and illustrate its universal jurisdiction. The miracle of tongues, the first and most notable of all, is itself a proof that the Christian faith was to be no longer restricted to one time or language,—a miracle needful once only, when men untaught and illiterate were to open communication with the assembled representatives of all nations and languages ; but altogether superfluous to-day, when, by the processes of education and the intermingling of men, the acquisition of various languages is an easy and ordinary occurrence.

By the *organized* evangelism of primitive believers, we mean all such human agencies as imply method, plan, system and sagacious adaptation, whether on the part of churches or individuals. Directed to tarry first at Jerusalem, the disciples forgot their world-wide commission till persecution, with its friendly violence, scattered them like a frightened flock. Comprehending, at length, the nature of their trust, we detect wisdom and fore-thought in the ordination of particular men to particular services. Peter, James and John, “ who seemed to be pillars,” went unto the circumcision ; while Paul and Barnabas were set apart to the ministry of the heathen. What wonders of wis-

dom are suggested by the bare mention of his name who is known as "the great Apostle to the Gentiles." Lord Lyttelton, fully persuaded that the Bible was an imposture and determined to expose it, selected the conversion of Paul as the subject of hostile criticism, and was himself converted to the truth of Christianity by the very topic chosen for its overthrow. Passing by the phenomena of the Apostle's conversion, it seems to us that an irrefutable argument for the universality of the Christian religion is suggested by the qualities which met in this remarkable man and minister. The service to be accomplished was the widest possible dissemination of the new faith among all nations ; the infusion of Christianity into the mind of the world. But what was the mind of the world at that time ? Not simple, but complicated. Three forms of civilization there were, distinct yet related, Jewish, Grecian, and Roman. Intermingled were the representatives of each, from farthest East to utmost West. The Jew was ubiquitous, from the Indus to the Tiber, with all the memories of his religion and the pride of his ancestry. The Greek had built his commercial cities and reared his elegant academies in Egypt and Syria. The translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek by the Seventy at Alexandria ; Philo, the Jewish philosopher, in the same city, and Josephus, the Jewish courtier at Jerusalem, both ambitiously addicted to Grecian literature, are evidences to what extent the Greek language and philosophy had become diffused ; while, as we have seen, over

the whole, East, West, North and South, the towering eagle of Imperial Rome was in the ascendancy. How many qualities must be combined in the man who, bearing the august title of "Apostle to the Nations," was to be sent forth to persuade such a heterogeneous civilization of the truth of the Christian religion. A Jew by birth, of the straitest sect, trained in every rite and law pertaining to the religion of his fathers, thoroughly experienced in every prejudice, objection and sympathy of the Pharisee; at the same time, born in Tarsus, a Greek city, the rival of Athens and Alexandria in the zeal of letters; from his childhood a proficient in the Greek language, familiar with the Septuagint as with the Hebrew original, a reader of the Greek drama and a great master of that "mental management" which then was to be learned only within the circle of Grecian dialectics and rhetoric, among his peers on Areopagus, in the presence of Stoic and Epicurean, comprehending perfectly the scorn which sat on the curled lip and gleamed from the half-shut eyes of his erudite auditors when he preached unto them the foolishness of the cross; superadded to all which, he was by birth a free Roman citizen, the highest protection and prerogative of his age, so that in every peril from Jew or Greek he was shielded as by Minerva's ægis, the report that he was a Roman throwing open the jail of Philippi for his egress, delivering him from the scourge and the mob on the castle stairs at Jerusalem, carrying him into the presence of governors and kings; and an appeal to Cæsar, transporting him over the Adriatic to the imperial city, where he had often longed to

go, and where, with mingled dignity, heroism and success, he preached the gospel of Christ "at Rome also ;" aye, within the very precincts of the palace ; Who can study this correspondence of exigencies and qualities in the person of him who leads the long column of Christian evangelists, without admitting the lesson thus taught the Christian church, for all time, concerning the wisdom of preparation, method, adaptation and combination in all her missionary aggression ?

Passing from those ordained and official agencies which, as we believe, are perpetual in the church for her edification and enlargement, there remains another, among the earliest instruments of Christian evangelism, which we have called the *spontaneous*, and, as we might have added, the secular and laical ; which, however overlooked and suspected now, if we have rightly interpreted the facts of the New Testament, was at the beginning among the most honored and successful of all human instrumentalities, and which is to be revived again, in more than pristine force, as a grand reliance of our modern missions.

It was by no accident that so large a concourse of unofficial persons, from all parts of the world, were assembled at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. "Then they that were scattered abroad," so reads the Sacred Record, "went everywhere preaching the word."* Stumble not at the word

* To render it certain that the allusion here is not to the ordained officials of the church, it is added in the same chapter, (Acts viii.) "they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, *except the Apostles.*"

“preaching,” because of the official associations which are connected with it by modern usage. It signifies simply, in its original sense, the act of evangelizing or reporting abroad the good news of salvation. The news of a great victory outstrips the official heralds who are sent to announce it. The idea on which we would insist is already before you. Stately apostleships, ordained dignitaries were not the only channels of saving grace. The ceremonial holiness and exclusiveness which, as we have seen, belonged to the official persons, representing the preparatory dispensations of Christianity, were lost forever when Christianity had reached its ripeness and universality. Profanation was it for any mortal, save the anointed son of Levi, to touch the vessels of the local worship; but now that the fountains of life are unsealed, every one who receives of their fullness heralds it abroad in every place. A matter of personal experience, they could not leave it behind them; but bore it with them as an inseparable part of their own life.

The Christian faith was thus propagated in the easiest and most natural of all methods. It was the outbreaking of spontaneous and irrepressible force. It revealed and declared itself, as light shines, without compulsion. Such is our conception of the spontaneity with which the honest self-conviction of the earliest converts to Christ made expression of itself, that it strikes us as something preposterous, to imagine the first company of disciples engaged in urging one another to a more earnest propagation of the faith by that style of arguments, drawn from philanthropy, obligation,

expediency, necessity and policy, which make up the persuasion of our modern missionary aggression. There is next to nothing of all this in the New Testament. Possessing, or rather possessed by this one fact of the gospel, that Jesus Christ had died for the world's redemption, they spread the glorious tidings wherever they went.

One of the most pregnant passages in all the New Testament, bearing on Christian missions, is that last chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, which, consisting chiefly of personal salutations to private persons, might strike a superficial eye, as the least promising and instructive, containing nothing but a bare and arid catalogue of names.

There was at this time, Anno Domini 60, a Christian church, that is, a body of Christian believers in the imperial city. It had been in existence for a considerable time. It had grown to such a magnitude as to justify the Apostle in addressing to it the most elaborate of all his Epistles. By whom was that church established? By some, it has been regarded as of prime importance to hold that the Apostle Peter was the founder of that metropolitan church. By itself, the assertion is of very little consequence; correct or incorrect, not worth a tithe of the words which have been expended upon the controversy. But the assertion does not stand by itself. It is the foundation-stone of a vast system of hierarchical pretension. Archbishop Whately has a capital essay on *omissions*. We infer as much, in certain cases, from what is *not* said, as, in others, from what *is* said. The classical reader will remember that it was the mere

which necessity and expediency may suggest, as a help to her saving work. We glory in the belief, that in all matters touching the real efficiency of the Christian church, she has received of her Lord the utmost liberty which her largest benevolence could desire. Water, air, light, are not more free in flowing into every opening and filling every cavity, than was the spirit of the primitive church in adapting its action to every exigency. We must go back to the records of Christianity themselves, if we would learn more of what the church is yet to learn much—the power and wisdom of lay-agency. Practical evangelism is not to be confined to Pauls and Peters, Brainerds and Martyns; and in the proper place, it may be well to institute the inquiry, whether among the means and methods of evangelizing the heathen it should not be projected by laymen, of all arts and professions, we do not say to be sent, but to send themselves, in the arrangements of their own trade, toil and traffic, all over the earth, for the express purpose of being succorers of the gospel, rearing churches—as did those men and women whose names inspiration has immortalized in this Roman epistle, above any emblazoned on classic pillar or tablet—in their own homes, and pouring light and love through all the channels of secular intercourse, upon the souls of the benighted.

And now, having considered the relations of Christianity and the world, at the beginning, together with some of the means by which the one was diffused throughout the other, we transport ourselves across intervening centuries and continents, to the

spot where we now stand, in the heart of the New World ; and from this position, late in time, and remote in space from the point where Christianity began its flight, we are to ask whether the relations of these two objects, Christianity and the World, are such as will justify the sentiment to which we are pledged.

And here, the first fact which stretches itself entirely across our vision, is the astounding verity that eighteen centuries have entirely passed away since the ascension of our Lord, and yet so limited is the territorial domain of Christianity, that not one whole nation under heaven can be found entirely and thoroughly pervaded by its presence and power. Scoffing skepticism would bid us answer, what else than a chimera it can be, for us to set forth the notion that the world and Christianity were made one for another, when, after so long an experiment, Christianity has not even retained its own, but has been diluted by error, subject to monstrous abuses and perversions, and has lent itself to the most long-lived and tyrannical of all superstitions, cursing the nations it should have blessed, and diverted out of its course by a thousand obstacles.

We volunteer no explanation of the mysteries of Providence, in the history of the Christian religion. The life of God is eternal ; and his plans extend through thousands of years. Speak of delays and disappointments, of long ages of darkness and of barbarism ! Tell us of the centuries in which the Christian faith was wrapped up in the mummy cerements of formalism and superstition ! The

very mistakes of men, in reference to religion, are instructive ; and the experiments of human folly, though they consume ages, are a real economy of time ; for men, when they are bent on making trial of their own expedients, in place of the blessed gospel, emerge on the hither side of the experiment with more of wisdom, more of self-conviction, because the lesson has been burned into them by centuries of suffering and shame. Multiply your objections to any degree, as drawn from the delays and corruptions of the Christian faith, the one fact remains, and this is all which we are concerned now to state, that Christianity has been a gainer at every stage and epoch of its eventful life. It has not merely survived opposition, but actually drawn lustre from reproach, and developed strength in every conflict, so that its practical power is greater now than ever it was before. Its power is greater to-day than when it was first preached at Jerusalem. It is greater now than when the labarum of Constantine blazoned the cross in courts and camps. It is greater now than when Britain was converted to the Christian faith ; greater by far than at the era of the Reformation. It possesses a wider territorial jurisdiction than when the Puritans landed in the new world. Who can doubt that it has a stronger hold on the intelligent convictions of the world, than it had before Lord Herbert wrote his work, "De Veritate," Toland his "Christianity without Mystery," Lord Shaftesbury his "Characteristics," Collins his essay on "Free Thinking," Bolingbroke his "Essays and Fragments," Tindal

his “Christianity as old as the Creation,” Hume his “ Dialogues on Nature and Religion,” or Paine his “Age of Reason.”

If we have been instructed in observing the adaptations of Christianity and the world, one to another, at the beginning of the Christian era, who can doubt that both have proceeded from the same authorship, and have obeyed the same direction, in subsequent stages and developments?

We have spoken of *the world* as being ready for Christianity, when Christianity was ready for it. We mean the world *as it then was*. We have reason to believe that the feet of the Apostles and their contemporaries traversed the then known world, from Arabia to Britain. But how large a portion of the world we inhabit, was entirely concealed from their knowledge and approach. The roads surveyed by the last imperial decree before the advent of Christ, were less than four thousand miles in extent. The most westerly land known to the “mistress of the world” was one of the Canary Islands ; the most northerly, called Ultima Thule, one of the Shetlands. Africa was supposed to be joined to Asia on the south, and was not circumnavigated till the fifteenth century after Christ. In the geography which was compiled by Ptolemy in the second century, we have embodied all the knowledge which then existed of the earth. From this we learn that the portion of land belonging to the globe, of which anything was known to Ptolemy and his contemporaries, was scarcely one-third of that which is known to us ; while of the

one hundred and fifty-five millions of square miles of water covering the rest of the globe, they knew absolutely nothing. How scanty the knowledge possessed by them of the globe, appears from the belief then prevalent, that none but the temperate zone was habitable ; both the torrid and the frigid zones being supposed to be destructive of animal life.

Plainly it was the intention of Providence, that Christianity should pass through various trials before, in its highest and latest sense, it should be fitted for the literal occupancy of the whole world. The mystery of the sea hid one entire hemisphere from human sight. These broad rivers were running their long way silently and wondrously to the sea. These forests grew and decayed, and grew again in their endless reproduction. These wide and western prairies lay beneath the eye of God, in patient and beautiful trust in the future uses of the Almighty. No Tyrian ship, no Egyptian barge, no Grecian argosy, no Roman galley, no Saracen flotilla was suffered to pass the “pillars of Hercules,” and break the silence and mystery of the Western ocean, and plant on these shores the irradicable seeds of their varied and mighty superstitions. The time was not yet for the widest possible dissemination of the Christian faith.

Observe the changes to which Christianity itself was subject ; trials and changes for which *time* was needful, and each and all of which were developing more and more of the universal qualities of the true faith.

The first great trial to which it was subject, was in the presence of Jewish intolerance and heathen hate. The one question was, whether it should be suffered to live. World-wide the persecution rages against the church. The Neros, the Caligulas, the Domitians of the earth resolved to drown the spreading “superstition” in blood. The more violently the storm rages, the deeper are the roots which the Christian faith strikes into the ground, and the broader the growth which it spreads into the air.

Next, Christianity was corrupted and perverted. The very power which before had assaulted the religion of Christ, now treacherously assumes the name, the crown, the robe and the sceptre of Christ, and the world became enslaved to an aged and colossal tyranny. The next advance of Christianity was to divest herself of all these falsehoods and enslavements, and come forth free and reformed.

The Protestant Reformation was a great event, marvelous in its nature and effects. But it was not an event complete and ultimate. It was only one of the demiurgic days of the world’s creation. It was not the Sabbath of the world’s finishing and repose. It was a movement in the right direction ; but it implied the necessity and the promise of greater changes to come.

Protestantism itself crystalized into icy forms, and Christianity was lulled to sleep in the arms of political establishments. It had its rituals, its injunctions, its forced conformities ; at length its lifeless ceremonies. It was needful that reformed,

Protestant Christianity, should have a second resurrection. At last it came. When truth had taken root, when it had become incorporated into church creeds, and had become an admitted element of national faith, then came the Puritans and the Non-conformists, an order of men whose sole desire was for spiritual life ; and now it was that Christianity, invested with all the accumulated experience of ages, crosses the ocean, and finds, in a new world, the theatre for a new and higher development.

Observe, this country was not settled, not at all in the proper sense of the term, until after the Protestant Reformation. The men who gave a soul to our history were Protestants in a double sense ; reformers of the reformation. Yet were they called of God to a service which, while it was needful and manly, was not the most favorable to spiritual extension. Times of resistance to ecclesiastical despotism are not the most auspicious for true evangelism. Those who are summoned to do vigorous battle against positive wrongs, are not always the best prepared or the most successful in making glad the wilderness with the verdure and bloom of the gospel. This accounts for the fact that, at the Reformation, Christianity, though liberated by the struggles of Truth, was not largely extended by the power and impulses of Love.

A century was allowed the new church to strike its roots deep into our soil ; a century of unmolested freedom, with just trial enough to make root and fibre tough and strong. The ocean rolled between it and ecclesiastical despotism. Here was Protest-

anism, and Protestantism free, unshackled, with none to dictate or circumscribe, and a new and boundless continent for its expansion. She planted her churches, established her schools and colleges, educated her children, reared her ministers, and with occasional follies and mistakes, such as will mar all things human, the thing attained was a community of free and thoughtful men, born and bred in the faith of God's own word.

When all this was accomplished, there occurred, throughout the Christian world, but chiefly on our own continent, an event, now little more than a century ago, which, if we rightly understand it, must be regarded as the most significant and important, and, in its relations to the future, suggestive and prophetic, of all which has taken place thus far in the history of the Christian church since the ascension of our Lord and the wonders of Pentecost. We refer to that great revival of religion, which, like the breath of spring, passed over the face of Christendom, the focal point of which was in the central parts of Massachusetts. Time enough has now elapsed for generalizing into one, events which, at the time, appeared distinct and unrelated. Methodism, as it arose in the English church, a thing, not a name, so ably analyzed and described by Isaac Taylor, and the revivals of religion in Scotland and New England, may be regarded as one historic development. The peculiarities were local and formal ; the essential was the same in all. The substantial features of that great religious movement, were the waking up of personal consciousness,

a new sense of individual relationship to God, of intense life and earnest zeal for the conversion of souls. Men were converted to the truth of Christ in unusual numbers, with unusual rapidity and with unusual distinctness. The effect of that event has been felt in every part of the civilized world. The "missionary spirit," as the common expression is, that is, *active evangelism*, carrying and applying the gospel in every direction, at home and abroad, is the legitimate result, or rather the best description of that general movement. To mark the progress which has since been made by the Christian church, it must be observed that events, which once were extraordinary, are esteemed so no longer. The minds of men are already become familiar with occurrences and expectations which once were regarded as very uncommon. Many of the striking conversions recorded by Edwards, the pious historiographer of the earlier stages of this movement, would awaken no sense of surprise to-day. In the year 1820, Dr. Worcester, then Secretary of this Board of Foreign Missions, in an address to Christians of all denominations in this country, uses the following language: "By means of these establishments, [missionary,] and mostly since our last address to you, more than *thirty* persons, belonging to five or six different heathen nations, have, in the judgment of charity, been brought to the spiritual knowledge of the truth." The announcement is made as of a great event, and in very guarded phrase, as if it must meet with incredulity. Yet such advances have been made since then that,

without any surprise, we hear that *thousands*, in a single year, have been converted to God in the Pacific Isles. Should it be announced before this our annual session is closed, that twenty thousand among the Tamil and Armenian population of the East were truly converted to Christ, it would not appear half so wonderful as the conversion of the first ten or twenty at the beginning of that era of evangelism from which we measure our latest progress. We have been moving with a great current, of the swiftness and force of which, as of our Mississippi, we have but little conception while borne upon its mighty tide. The Christian sentiment of the country has deepened in its flow. There is more of active philanthropy now than ever before ; more of organized effort to relieve misery, reclaim vice, inform ignorance ; more, in a word, than at any previous epoch, to diffuse the gospel with its light and charities. Added to all which, those revivals of religion, which have given a peculiarity to this latest period of Christian development, have not disappeared ; fewer in number, feebler in power, more limited in extent than we could desire, yet sufficient in well-attested effects to keep it fresh in our minds to what period of time we belong, and always prophetic of the greater disclosures of the future.

Turning to the future, we expect and believe that the gospel, diffused and extended, by appropriate instrumentalities, throughout the world, will be accompanied by a power from on high, producing effects on the minds of men, compared with

which all that has preceded is but the shadow of the sun. We predict no smooth current of undisputed and uninterrupted prosperity. Fallings away, heresies, infidelities, strugglings, like the heathenish signs of the zodiac, may be in the path of our sun. Nevertheless, the pure truth of God will receive the widest circulation. Copies of the word of God will be multiplied, and the Christian ministry reinforced in adequate numbers. All the appliances of modern invention and enterprise, the new stimulus given to commerce, and all the facilities for international communication, will find their true dignity and use in diffusing the truth of God with ever-increasing rapidity and extent. In this service of disseminating truth, there will be a place for every kind of instrumentality. Lay-agency, introduced so efficiently by Wesley and Whitefield in the last awakening of the church, was only prophetic of that universal life and activity which are hereafter to characterize the membership of the Christian church. Here then is one definite expectation for the future. Here is an appropriate place for every good work. As God converts men by truth, it is an indispensable work. “The *knowledge* of the Lord is to cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea.”

Nor is this a service to be finished, by itself, before we are to expect yet greater things. Simultaneously with the diffusion of truth, we may expect those applications of the Divine Spirit, which will subdue opposition, conquer unbelief, and bring mankind into a personal acceptance of the gospel

in numbers, rapidity and decision, such as never yet have been seen. The great harvest, of which all preceding gatherings are but the first fruits, is yet to come. We have had, as yet, only the type and the shadow. The substantial reality is still future. Nothing yet has occurred worthy to be regarded as a fulfillment of the great promises of Scripture relative to the universal outpouring of the Holy Spirit. What occurred at Pentecost, "signs and wonders in the heavens, sun and moon changed, the heavens and the earth shaken," was only the beginning in the verification of the tropical language of Joel, the first in that long series of events which are to mark the triumphs of the Spirit of God. We rejoice over the conversion of a few, here and there; one from a family, and two from a neighborhood; but accessions are not always to be made to the church of Christ after this manner. The church will never overtake the growth of this world's population, according to such an arithmetic. We have as yet but a glimpse,—enough to bear up and guide our faith, but a prophecy still,—of the *number* of those who will be made willing in the day of God's power. They are likened unto the drops of the morning dew. The church is yet to be the joy of the whole earth; and men will flock into it as "**CLOUDS AND AS DOVES TO THEIR WINDOWS.**"

Nor is it of numbers only that we speak. A new epoch is coming as to the character of those converted, and the nature of a religious life. We talk of men converted now; but, oh, how little do we

know of spiritual life! We are like corpses galvanized into partial vitality. We talk about the spiritual world. But how little does the strongest faith apprehend, as yet, of the powers of the world to come! Sense still holds the ascendancy. This is not to be so always. We have reason to anticipate such a new power, applied by the Holy Ghost to the souls of men, that the life, the love, the faith, the joy, the sanctity of men renewed will be so much in advance of all we now experience, that our life, compared with theirs, will appear like a sleep. Those great words, **GOD, CHRIST, MAN, SIN, SALVATION, HEAVEN, HELL**, over which men now slumber, even when they admit them into their intellectual convictions, will be as if illuminated with flame. We do not comprehend the gospel at all, in its richness and glory, as it will be comprehended in the future effusions of the Spirit. We see men as trees walking. We are purblind, groping our way among shadows. The time is coming when men will be as if endowed with new senses, so vivid, so intense will be their consciousness of spiritual things. God will no more be thought of as afar off, but nigh unto all who call upon him. Heaven will no more appear as a distant and dreamy world of the imagination. Its fragrant odors will be inhaled, and its happy songs will be heard by those who dwell upon the earth. Love to Christ will be no more a frozen compound of obligation and self-interest; but a well of gratitude and joy, springing up to everlasting life. Then property will all be consecrated to the best uses.

What is now extorted reluctantly, by the pressure of duty and the commands of conscience, will then be the spontaneous promptings of an ever-cheerful and ever-living love. Holiness to the Lord will be upon the bells of the horses ; and commerce, and art, and enterprise, will flow on musically and joyfully in the channels of justice, love and mercy. The half-and-half life of the best Christians is only prophetic of that future power of the Spirit, when renewed man shall once more be a **LIVING SOUL**. The most godly men, of these modern times of revived evangelism, are but the shadows of that approaching form of the Christian man, who is to be “filled with the Spirit.” Primitive Christianity did not fulfill that great promise. Beautiful was the simplicity of the early disciples of Christ. That quality is to be regained, copied and surpassed. In stature, we are children but once. But when we have outgrown infancy, and the body has reached its maturity, and the intellect its strength, the glory of our nature is in becoming little children again in simplicity of spirit. Even so the church, led through the discipline of ages, adult in strength, clothed with the sun for knowledge and power, will find her highest perfection and exaltation in superadding to all these gifts and graces the simplicity and love of those who first followed Christ as “dear children.” Literally may it be true, in a sense, never imagined by ancient piety, that, as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, even so will the coming of the Son of Man be. These electric nerves,

which make the air to throb with thought and life, not always to be the heralds of mere political and mercantile tidings, will be the vehicles of religious news and religious love. Nor is it any freak of our imagination, to suppose the time may come when, as the people of God are assembled at the rising of the sun for praise and prayer, the lightning shall report it from the east, '*The Lord is here;*' and the lightning shall flash it back from the west, '*The Lord is here,*' and so the "tabernacle of God shall be with men. He shall be their God, and they shall be his people."

Long before that time shall fully come, we, fathers and brethren, will have passed from the earth. What then? Have we no relation to it? Verily, we are living in the dispensation of the Spirit. Ours is the day of preparation; in some regards more privileged, since faith, patience and labor are the instruments of future success. Better are our times than those of our fathers. For their fidelity, for their quick discernment of the ways and work of God, we may well be thankful; but the future is all bright with promise for us and our children. Our fathers are still with us. Their grateful spirits are over us and among us, when we meet to prosecute the work which they began. As the martial hero, whom poetry has described on the eve of battle as new-strung with life, when, at the tap of his drum, the shades of his ancestors came thronging around him, in the dusky air; so do we feel ourselves cheered, ennobled and exalted, by the memory of the good and the great, whose

faces smile on us from the past and from heaven ; the serene and hopeful Worcester, the sagacious Chapin, the devout Lyman, the generous Phillips, the manly Huntington. We knew not how to spare them when Evarts, Cornelius, Wisner and Armstrong were taken from the world ; but we have found that they are not lost to us and our cause, now that the heavens have touched them. In the inventory of available means by which the church is to conduct her conquests, we could not afford to subtract the influence of those who have already died in the service. Our dead missionaries are as eloquent as the living. The brave soldier who was bearing home the heart of his King, in an urn, to be entombed in his native land, when sorely pressed and in danger of defeat, rose in his stirrups, and, before the eyes of his troops, threw the precious treasure far in advance, into the very thickest of the enemy ; knowing that this would be the surest method of inciting his countrymen to press forward to the rescue. The church has thrown many precious hearts into Heathenism, as the pledge and the motive for further advancement. Those who have sent their Newells, Lathrops and Huntingtons, their Fiskes, their Halls and their Grants, their own sons, daughters, brothers and sisters to die in Asia, Africa and the islands of the sea, have never so much as thought of abandoning a cause already endeared to them by so many precious associations. A thousand living hearts and homes in America are drawn towards the lands in which are the graves of our deceased missionaries. As

Abraham bought a cave in the field of Machpelah, as a burying-place for his household, a pledge of his faith in the divine promise, that the whole land should one day belong to his posterity, so is every missionary grave, in every heathen country, a similar proof of our belief that the lands in which they lie will hereafter be converted unto Christ. Tocat will not be Mohammedan, when Henry Martyn shall rise in the last day; nor will Aleppo, nor Ceylon, nor the Isle of France, nor China, be lands of delusion, when those who have gone from our homes and our churches to sleep therein, shall greet the light of the promised resurrection. Towards that vast result everything advances. There are eddies and back currents in our largest rivers; but the main course is on and on, resistless and magnificent towards the ocean. The quiet Merrimac, on whose peaceful banks this missionary organization had its inception, beareth greetings to-day to the broader and deeper Ohio; and both clap their hands together, as they flow on to meet the Ganges and the Euphrates. These mighty valleys, covered with corn, laugh with gladness, in prospect of that spiritual affluence which they are yet to distribute over all the earth. The churches which have sprung up on the edge of the wilderness, fast as the forest has dropped before the march of civilization, instead of being themselves beneficiaries, in need of assistance, have, many of them, already become, and more will yet become, the most munificent almoners in a service which is destined to endless growth and reproduction. The footsteps

of our children are already on the shores of the Pacific. Before their fathers have left the world, from the "Golden Gates" which God has given us, they look out upon those Christian islands, which sparkle like gems in the sea, converted, in our own life-time, from barbarism to the dignity of an intelligent, self-governed and religious people. Our language and our religion already encircle the globe.

We pledge ourselves, therefore, to no doubtful issue. This world was not only made *by* Christ, but *for* Christ. Every loyal thought, every pious act, is auxiliary to that kingdom of the Redeemer which has the oath of God, and the decree of eternity for the certainty of its triumph. For that result, Faith waiteth with calm serenity; her hand upon her anchor. Christian calmness is not the offspring of doubt, but of conscious strength. God has anointed his king on his holy hill of Zion. Clouds may hang around its top, and billows may break at its feet, but that mountain standeth on its eternal foundations. Oppose in heart or life the dominion of Christ, and the wheels of the prophet's vision roll over us and grind us to powder. Acquiesce therein, and we become identified with that numberless throng who will swell the train of His triumphs and reflect and share the glories of His reign. We shall die; but Christ liveth. Because He liveth, we shall live also. Good and faithful men shall be jewels in the diadem of our God, which will sparkle when the stars are dead.





PRES. WHITE'S SERMON

BEFORE THE

American Board of Commissioners
for Foreign Missions,

Preached at Hartford, Conn., September 12, 1854.



"POWER BELONGETH UNTO GOD."

(6)

A

S E R M O N,

Preached at Hartford, Connecticut, September 12, 1854,

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AT THEIR

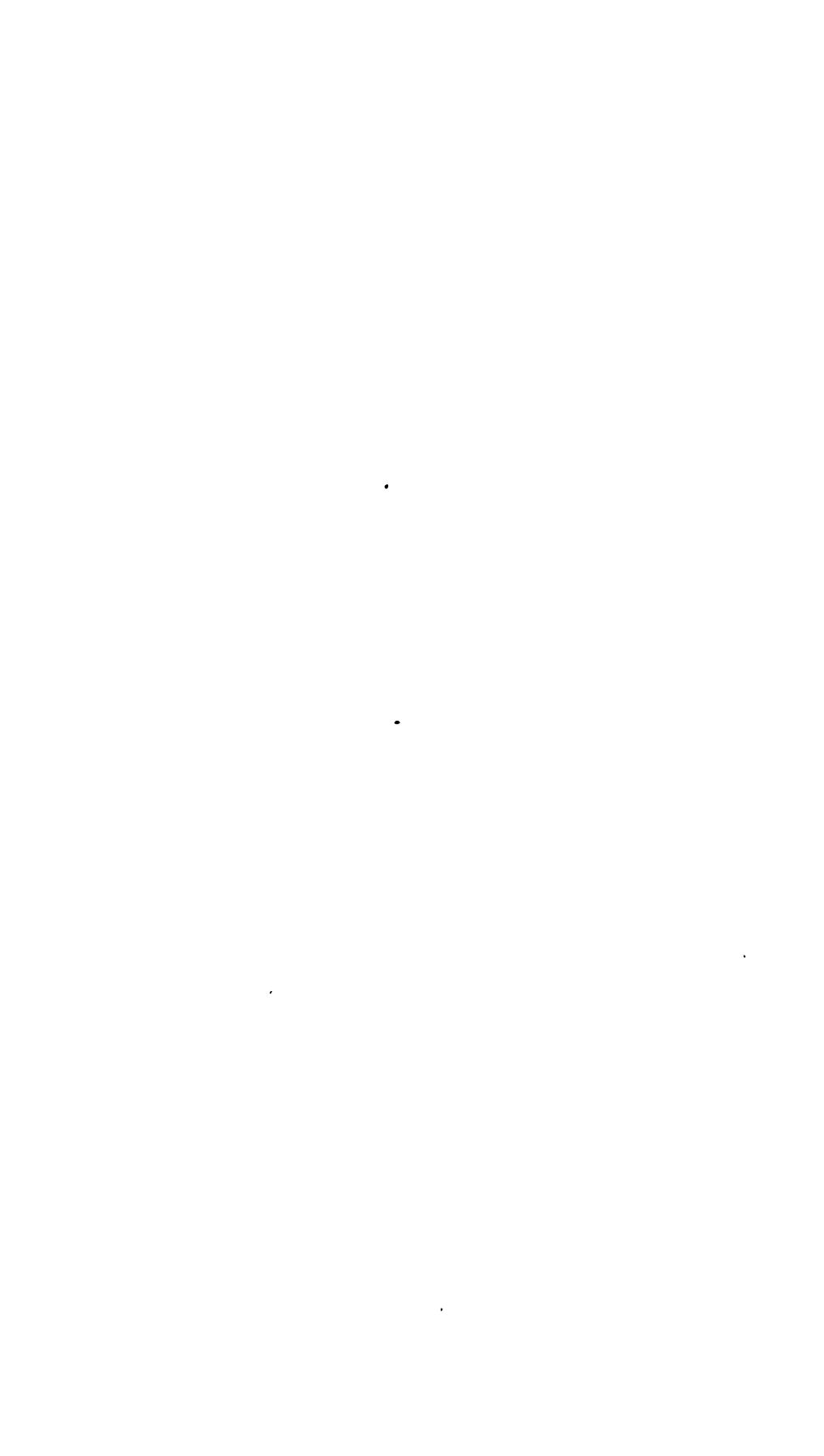
FORTY-FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING.

BY CHARLES WHITE, D. D.

President of Wabash College.

BOSTON:
PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN, 42 CONGRESS STREET.

1854.



S E R M O N .

MATTHEW VI. 10.

THY KINGDOM COME. THY WILL BE DONE.

IT is a manifest and prominent part of the Divine arrangements, that man shall be invested with great power. He loves the possession dearly. It is the command of God, however, that he hold all this efficiency in subserviency to the divine will; not in fee-simple, but in the way of tenantry or trusteeship; not in the character of principal, but in that of agent. But this does not satisfy him. Man desires intensely to hold power in his own independent right; he claims persistently and most resolutely to employ it according to his own simple will, irrespective of God, Law or Gospel. He goes a step farther. Moved by feelings of decided revolt at the idea of acting under a superior, in subserviency to a foreign will, he deeply and actively repudiates divine direction and supervision.

But man, uncontrolled and undirected of Heaven, is a very incompetent and unsafe depositary of power. He uses it carelessly, extravagantly, viciously. He permits it to injure and destroy himself—to break loose from his hand, and carry ruin

to his neighbors. He uses it often, directly and of design, in scattering arrows, firebrands and death.

In this condition of things, Christianity interferes. Its spirit is in the prayer, "Thy kingdom come." *Thy kingdom come.* Let other rule cease; let man give place, obey; let the Lord reign. "Thy will be done." It would have all power used under God's sovereign wish and wisdom.

It will be observed, that here is no proposal on the part of Christianity to dispossess mankind of their efficiency; none to narrow, to neutralize, to obstruct it in the least degree. The generic purpose is to induce men, as acting stewards, to hold and employ whatever forces are lodged with them, cordially, according to the judgment and direction of the Great Owner.

The tendency and competency of Christianity to this consummation, viz., *The proffer, as a free-will offering, of all human power to the hand and will of the Deity*, is the subject of the present observations.

I. Power is physical, mental, and moral. Under the first, the physical, must be included muscular force, and the agencies of nature as simple instruments of that force. The submission of both these to the direction and use of the Deity, Christianity enjoins, on the simple principle of a divine right and ownership by virtue of creation.

Whatever is in the heavens above, in the earth beneath, in the waters under the earth, because the work of the Almighty hand, the Scriptures claim to be all God's own. Saith the Psalm: "The sea is his, and he made it; the strength of the hills is his

also, and his hand formed the dry land." Saith another Psalm: "All that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine, for in wisdom hast thou made them all." The whole Scripture, on this basis of creation and ownership, admitting neither limitation nor exception, requires all physical power to bow the knee to God. Wherever Christianity goes, and lodges its principles and leaves its transformations, this is done. The submission of the physical energies, animate and inanimate, to God's direction and employment, involves several important effects.

It rescues a large amount of force from idleness. In the absence of religious motive and responsibility quite one half, in some districts a much larger proportion, of the muscular capacity of mankind, lies in lethargic sleep. This leaves nearly *all* the inanimate agents motionless in their native abodes. Christianity unconditionally forbids and loathes all listless laziness. Its ordination is, that everything work positively—not breathe simply, but work! Not move barely—work—have something to do, and be doing it wide awake. It encourages not one current to stagnate; not one particle of light or electric spark to hide itself for quiet; not one muscular fibre nor pulse of life to stop; not one elemental atom of the material universe to be still. Pauses in Christian arrangements are only apparent. As winter months hoard for vernal luxuriance, so these intervals assist a concealed gathering of forces for an outburst of mightier activities. Christianity makes a first and special requisition upon all latent and inactive muscular force; then through this, upon all the powers of

nature which lie in useless repose. Abjuring the reserving at rest any one efficiency which can bless humanity, it calls all power out upon the surface of society ; renders it instinct with action and vigor ; sets it to drive the good purposes of life.

The submission of physical power to the Deity by Christianity, involves the rescue of another large portion of it from debilities induced by vice. As the hot breath of the desert to vegetation, is wicked passion to bodily energies. Sinful indulgence steals accomplishment out of the strongest frame, as surely as a consumption. The amount of physical vigor eaten up and smothered by bad propensities and evil conduct, is truly immense. Arithmetic is abashed at any attempt at calculation. Christianity is uncompromising interdiction, is death upon these exhausting sins. It brings muscular power to God fresh, vital, vigorous, growing, well tasked, well directed. Then, through the use of this, presents to Him giant nature with her vaster power. Christianity would blush to her heart, to present physical forces to Heaven halt and maimed and blind and palsied and dumb and possessed with devils. It makes them whole, of whatever disease is gnawing and wasting them. Then, thus made healthy and powerful, lays them over into the divine Hand to do many mighty works.

Physical power, also, in the process of being placed by Christianity at the disposal of the divine will, is rescued from pernicious and fatal uses. Human activities, not evangelically imbued and directed, are driving many reckless and destructive operations. Among these are scandalous and infidel

publications ; brewing, distilling, incendiarism, burglaries, assassinations, dueling, war, with its fathomless vortex engorging commerce, harvests, cities, lives by millions. Physical power devoted to such depraved purposes, makes many a fair territory a blighted desolation, a scene of pollution, widowhood, orphanage, tears—a general Golgotha. Christianity, in committing into the hand of Heaven muscular and natural agencies, first redeems them altogether from this work of ruin. God has no wrong nor outrage, nor homicides, nor parricides, nor robberies, nor any sort of death-doings to be perpetrated. Christianity withdraws physical power from all these abominable works and ways ; wrests from its hand the sword, and revolver, and bowie knife, and fire-brand, and false key, and dark lantern, and artillery, and powder magazine, and war-ship. It is a blessed, conservative work, which Christianity has to do among the physical forces of the world.

An additional effect of the submission of physical power by Christianity to the divine direction is, that it will be appropriated largely to social benefits. Being itself devoted to such benefits, religion does not think a moment of any other employment for muscular and inanimate forces. It proposes and provides, therefore, that these forces be set apart exclusively, as instrumentality to multiply in human society all solid advantages ; to rear everything which ought to be built ; to plant everything which ought to grow ; to drive every enterprise that bears a good embellishment or a sound blessing. There are, it is true, many physical activities and advantages and advancements not traceable directly to

religion ; but wherever under divine supervision, physical power is assisting to work out social ameliorations ; the activities, advantages, and advancements are very unusual and superior. The industrious economy, the excellent tillage, the abounding harvests, the growing wealth, the multiplied villages, the rising marts of trade, the extended and extending railways, canals, telegraphic wires, the new bridges and improved harbors, the perfected transportation, the opened mines, the thrifty manufactures, the secular and religious presses, the commodious churches and eleemosynary structures, —all these prosperous conditions and arrangements, under divinely directed physical forces, are ages in advance of those of unchristianized countries. Let the muscular and inanimate powers producing this stirring social thrift, these moral appliances, change masters and pass out from divine counsels, and there will come up over the scene, inevitably, a disastrous reverse ; a general hesitation, irregularity, paralysis, confusion, as when a pestilence has affrighted and ravaged a community.

Physical power, directed of God, standing immediately antecedent to the best outward activities, becomes an excellent and rich provider of outward social improvements.

It is another happy result of the submission of physical power to divine direction, that it becomes eminently safe. Notwithstanding the number and variety of its applications, and the magnitude of its largest services, there is an attendant security, which is quite remarkable in this world of adventure, of jeopardy, of disaster.

This outward force is made manageable and unharzing, when divinely subjugated, first, by being exempted from the influence of headlong passion; secondly, by means of its deference to God's injunctions. This exemption and this deference united are competent to insure complete safety to all the action of the entire material world. While this remains a scene of sin and imperfection, however, there may be ever expected, in the use of great forces occasionally as exceptions, sad casualties, violent deaths, wasting mischiefs, which no human sagacity will foresee, no finite providence forestall. But let physical power, inanimate and muscular, be all prepared and used strictly according to God's modes and principles, as it will be when committed to him by Christianity; let every child and man, who puts power to use, or orders it put to use, or enjoys its use—even every miner, assayer of ores and metals, iron-founder, ship and bridge builder, and mill-wright; every coast-surveyor, chart-maker, railway-constructer, car-manufacturer, engine and machine maker; every coach-driver, lamp-lighter, switch-tender, gate and bridge watcher, signal-bearer, breakman, baggage-master, engineer, clerk, pilot, conductor, stockholder, freighter, passenger, director, telegrapher,—let all these act and labor as God directs; let them do it intelligently and conscientiously, obedient to full principles of temperance, to a just love and value of life, of property, of all human rights,—and crimes and mischiefs and destructions will become uncommon occurrences; general safety will reign.

This consideration of safety is one of vast import-

tance, when we take into view the immense amount of physical power already at hand, and the still vaster amount capable of being yet evolved and brought to hand. The agencies of nature lie every where in rich stores, restless to come abroad whenever human skill shall turn the key to their dwelling-place ; anxious to obey, the moment man has learned how to command. Nature shrinks from no work, of whatever magnitude, but her own destruction ; stands ready to every service which man needs to have performed for him.

Natural forces are mighty to evil as well as to such good. Under the careless, heated, daring depravities of men, they lay waste in manners and measures most appalling and irresistible. Winds drive cargoes of life and wealth upon rocks and quicksands. Property untold, and bodies unnumbered, are laid down in the deep. Gunpowder explodes and makes a general destruction ; steam bursts its bands, and men are burned and mutilated and submerged and killed by hundreds and thousands. Goods and chattels are wasted by it with still greater recklessness and profusion.

That portion of physical power found in man's muscular organization, seems feeble compared with other animate forces, and scarcely appreciable compared with the available inanimate agency already referred to. But even this is capable of truly amazing achievements. If we could gather before us into one view, all the changes wrought in a community by human hands in a single day ; if, the whole being present, we could observe each man as he plied his labor, and worked out his results—could

see each muscle of the whole population, as it contracted, and wrought, and laid down its handiwork—we should be filled with astonishment at the immense amount of physical exertion and production. The muscular power of mankind, collected into one accumulation, could carry the immensest cities from side to side of a continent. It could take up islands and clusters of islands, and drop them into a neighboring sea.

Muscular power, armed for mischief, we have seen can desolate families, inflict crushing servitudes, destroy property and life, cover the face of society with blight and wretchedness. This power of man, so mighty an efficiency when exerted *alone* and unassisted, becomes, when associated with the agents of nature, nearly an omnipotence. Certainly these united agencies, the muscular and the natural, are too powerful to be intrusted for direction to any other but the one wise God.

As was just now suggested, it is a matter of incalculable interest to us that Christianity, in committing to the guidance of Heaven these powers, so full of blessings and destructions, has placed them all under needed bands and limitations, where they are as peaceful and uninjuring as submissive infancy. Subjected to the divine goodness and care and control, physical power might, without danger, be more heavily drawn upon and used. Let man open deeper into nature's ample treasury, and open out a hundred times, a thousand times the efficiencies ever before appropriated to the services of human life ; let him fasten her powers to any number of industrial operations ; let him make her drive his spindles,

and shuttles, and drills, and trip-hammers, and ships, and cars, and foundries, at more dizzy and rapid rates ; let men's muscular energies, through mechanical assistances, be so multiplied that a single man may perform the labor of hundreds, and a single generation effect results equal to those of all the previous generations of the world. Let physical power, in all its forms and in all its uses, be multiplied and hastened to every conceivable extent ;—if the whole be committed to the direction of divine principles, mischiefs and deaths need not be feared. In these augmented measures, no doubt the physical will one day be developed and used, and its accomplishments out-rival all our present anticipations and hopes. And God will be there to make his own gift of power to men, so long as it is employed according to his injunctions, a secure almoner of munificent benefits, an unharmed aid to grand social advancements.

Placed then, though we are, in a great philosophic theatre and laboratory of steam and electricity, and propulsions and attractions, and evolutions and combinations ; placed, though we are, amid mighty and immeasurable energies, yet the wisdom and control of heaven being also there, as introduced by Christianity, we may labor and rest, abide at home and travel abroad, push active enterprises, speed the freights of benevolence, pursue intellectual inquiries, all in the most delightful and confiding security.

Physical powers uncontrolled, are like winds and waters and fires broken loose—most irresistible and terrific ! Physical powers, detained within their own proper Christian boundaries, are like these same

elements under mastery—a refreshment and bounty and life. It is certainly a noble, good work that Christianity performs, in bringing under divine regulation, and into the divine service, the external powers of man and nature. This simple subjugation is able to transform the whole exterior of the globe, and exalt the condition of all human society. What has the hand of man, aided by the hand of nature, wrought on the earth, even when misdirected, partially employed, much obstructed, excited by irregular passion, forced by the urgency of mere want, exacted by the will of superiors. What, in the use of physical power, has man done in his own native condition as a lazy, careless, prodigal animal?

Let Christianity into the heart of his operations. Let it approach the muscular energies and the powers of nature, and announce that there is no dispensation to sleep; none for useless or injurious action; none for squandering earned benefits. Let it draw out of obscurity, idleness, mischief, the entire physical force residing in a community; let it marshal the whole forth upon the theatre of heaving and breathing industry, to perform all the work which men ought to have done, speedily, strongly, prudently; *that* community will show a security and emergence and opulence and usefulness, under this divine régime, surpassing all Utopian dreams.

Come, Christianity, and take possession of the physical powers of the world, and submit them all to the disposal of Heaven! It is thine own work! It is a direct step toward the millennium—it is a grand part of the millennium itself. It is well that an inanimate and muscular power, commensurate to

all the good work and travel and transportation of the most active and prosperous conditions of human society, should be no longer intrusted to any impulse or direction but that of heavenly principles and heavenly teachings.

A fine physical theatre this world becomes, under the full influence of Christianity. While the more mighty and dangerous forces developed in electrical and meteorological phenomena, evolved under the roots of the mountains, and capable of rocking earth and main,—while these are reserved in God's own hand exclusively; while the rest, residing in fire, and air, and water, and muscle, and chemical elements, given for our use, are all committed to Heaven, and employed religiously to aid God's wide and kind designs towards men, there is nothing left to desire nor to prayer, as to this physical scene. It is all harmony, assurance and usefulness. The Divinity walks again amid his own creation, and seeth that all is good.

Let the church turn with thanksgiving to magnify the Christian system for its tendency and competency thus to bring the great powers of this outward world, and all muscular energies, to work kindly under God's direction, and thereby to assist toward all this thrifty physical prosperity—this wide abundance and comfort, which are as the waves of the sea.

II. Christianity has also a tendency and competency to bring the power of human intellect into a docile submission to God. In accomplishing this design, its first action is religio-educational. Deeply

appreciative of all that belongs to the noble representative of divinity—*mind*—Christianity seeks to be admitted as the guiding companion of all its training and study. In its earnest sympathy with our literary interests and happiness, it undertakes to introduce itself actually into the whole development and history of the intellectual powers.

In accomplishing this design, religion, as is right and needful, makes it a favorite endeavor to effect an education which shall possess, decidedly, the evangelical element. It would, in all stages of its opening and acquisition, evolve and allure the mind towards the Deity; familiarize it to its great duty and proper reverence before him; assiduously communicate to it an ever-deepening token and tone of the divine excellence. In furtherance of this intention, it would have the Bible used in all schools; made the inmate of all families; open its pure wisdom in all places of instruction, from the fireside to the university.

As its pupil-intellect grows into larger and nobler magnitude and proportions, religion, acting educationally, grows more urgent and eloquent and imperative in directing and imbuing its invigorations and accretions. Through all its way upward, to its widest expansion and utmost evolution of power, doth the gospel seek to open in fuller measures of wisdom and grace. Radical and prerequisite to the good design of making the whole human intellect a consecration to Heaven, is such early and assiduous instillation by religion of its own spirit and principles.

Mind, reduced to a state of fusion with Christian-

ity through Christian education, is, in all its powers, a devout and willing servant to God. Let the New Testament, with its treasury of truth and omnipotence, be permitted its proper place fast by the side of young intellect in its growing ; let it there ever point into eternity ; ever open up to Jehovah ; ever kindle the fire of religious devotion ; and there will be found ripened faculties of understanding and acquisitions of knowledge which possess a strong evangelical tendency, character, appreciation and power peculiarly fitting them to serve among God's moral forces.

Another effort of Christianity, in bringing the efficient power of the human mind to God's use and control, is to effect its recovery and preservation from waste and error. This is also radical and essential to the design of an intellectual consecration.

Incident to minds of a specially visionary and dreamy tendency, is a large squandering and loss through misuse and misdirection. An intellect of this description, shows a disposition to forego practical mental duties, and uselessly theorize when it ought to reason ; presume, when it ought to rest on facts ; imagine, when it ought to ponder truth ; search the unrevealed, when it ought to be bowing to Jehovah's clear declarations in reverence and obedience.

Christianity, by the simplicity, authority, illustrativeness of its modes of teaching ; by the comprehensiveness, perspecuity and practicalness of its direct, solid lessons, bears the mind out of all unsubstantial, unanchored speculations, all subtle

sophisms, all bewildering uncertainties ; bears it clear and confident into a sphere of unclouded light, verifiable realities, undoubted truth. This change from darkness to light is very essential in the process of presenting the intellectual powers as an available instrumentality to the service of heaven.

Water-logged, sunk, ploughing on the muddy bottom, is the mind submerged in visions, and pressed under impervious dogmas. What power hath it, in these slimy dwellings, for glorious, divine occupations. But a thing of life, motion, accomplishment it is, when religion has brought it up from its depths to the theatre of visible things under a clear heaven.

Kindred to this condition of mysticisms and visions is that of settled errors. Involved in these last, the mental powers are also much disqualified for the contribution of any good service to God. All opinion has a practical tendency ; it stands precedent influentially to all outward doing. If correct, it leads to good acting ; if false, to bad acting.

Doctrines then, founded on prejudice, presumption, mistake, instead of preparing the understanding for right labor under God, positively prepare it for wrong-doing under the prince of darkness. All bad views in philosophy, especially all bad ones in theology, must paralyze exertion in some departments of the Lord's service ; lead to useless action in others ; engage to wicked works in still other spheres. Christianity, in clearing out the intellect of its fallacies and falsehoods, and setting it upon just, luminous opinion,—steadfast, practical truth,—

has made it a servant of God true, invaluable, without rebuke. God shines upon it ; directly forth again still kindled, it sends the holy illumination. There is not a planet of the zodiac more faithful to radiate in return the same clear light that hath shone upon it from the parent orb, than are the minds which Christianity has cleared of mists and set out under the emanations of the divinity, to give back divine glories.

Christianity makes an offering of the intellect to God in another manner ; by first presenting to him the heart. Here the mode of operating is that of securing the work of an enginery by securing the fire that drives it ; of being availed of the effects of powder explosions by controlling the ignition of them. The intellectual powers are entirely at the bidding of the sensibilities ; do work in their fields ; perform the services of their dictation. So we are constructed.

Are the affections warm and fresh upon the Deity, the intellect is there in the divine presence, in all readiness and energy, to do any service. In every case that Christianity carries to the Heavenly Father an appropriate reverence, a filial reliance, a holy love, it carries along with these affections a renewed devotion of the intellectual faculties, a fresh appropriation of intellectual toil and influence. In every case that religion moves the spirit to a sympathy and impulse in behalf of human salvation, the intellect instantly fraternizes with the movement, and arouses and pledges its powers to the moral regeneration. Just as when an extraordinary heat has gone to occupy a region of the atmosphere,

there is a rush of strong wind hard after it. Not only does the intellect obey the dictates of the sensitive nature, but mental magnitude and power are much in proportion to the depth, volume and character of the emotions.

We have many illustrations of the mind's obedience to the heart. The military and other schools of the French, in the time of Napoleon, so nourished the young spirits of the empire into the then prevalent sentiments of glory, especially into the vast aspirations of Buonaparte himself, that almost one entire generation of youthful mind placed itself without reserve at the disposal of the emperor's stupendous ambition, as if that generation of youthful mind had been but an accretion and extension of his own grasping power. In the same way it is, that Christianity so schools the hearts of men into a rich inner life of purity and love of God's holy designs, that their thoughts become as his thoughts—their intellectual enterprises as his enterprises.

Under the good state of the moral sensibilities induced by Christianity, there will be another valuable influence upon the mind; I mean a recovery from its native lethargy and indolence, and a creation of general life from the dead among the mental faculties. Half the world would feel rebuked for idleness of the body; would feel most sovereign contempt for those who in outward activities cry a little more sleep, a little more folding of the hands to sleep. But mind, with its noble attributes, may lie buried and paralyzed, and few will take cognizance and few reproach. Seven-eighths of the

intellect of the world now dozes nearly the whole of life away, and large portions of the other one-eighth look on with perfect indifference.

Religion in the heart, Christian feeling and Christian conscience, issue an uncompromising and stern rebuke of all slumber of man's great understanding, significantly constituted for movement and accomplishment beyond aught else which God has created. God's minds lie still! Such lofty, brilliant creations in his own likeness, lie still, and do for Heaven no service! As well, the Christian heart thinks—better—that stars and suns go out—nature in all her works stand still. Better that every thing else which God has made, hide away to sleep. Up, Christianity crieth—up, all the intellectual powers—up, to God's great work in the world. Slumber never, until creation and Creator are asleep.

In speaking farther of the appropriation of the power of the human understanding to the Deity, I refer to the sphere, amount and value of the service which it is capable of rendering to the divine cause.

It is proper to suggest, that in God's great vineyard, all grades of intellect alike; the common and the gifted, the unlettered and educated, are very usefully employed.

The first good labor of religious common mind, is in behalf of the moral training of the following generation. In moulding young character into excellence, its favorite theatre is the fireside. Here it trains upright citizens and good servants of God. Next, it is found active and accomplishing in primary schools. The first teachers of every population are

the intelligent-unlearned ; their influence in this sphere, religiously directed, has the extraordinary value and efficiency attached to the first sowing of seed, to the first planting of trees, to the laying foundations and corner stones. If these incipient things be not done,—done Christianly,—nothing almost is to be done afterwards. Morals, and education, and society, may nearly as well be abandoned.

Evangelical common mind has also direct moral influences upon the general community of which it constitutes a large proportion. We do not undervalue the services of illustrious intellects. They are the suns of the planetary systems ; disorder and darkness would reign without them. The systems themselves, however, made up of reflecting orbs, are important also, and constitute much the larger portion of existence and activity. Minds unprivileged by a superior education, not being upon the high places of society, attract little observation, and obtain little renown ; but it is a valuable work which they perform down amid the darkness which underlays human life ; down amid the damps and pestilences which issue their desolations over the surface of society. Their renovations and infusions in the under strata of the population are indispensable. Good unlettered minds are socially the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. The gospel has nearly lost its power in the world without them.

The Bible-minded of common life may be regarded as the moral conservatives of their times ; when theorizing and speculation run wild, old, stable

truth often stands anchored immovably in their plain, pious sense and sturdy intelligence. They are God's hardy soldiery, which beat back opposing columns, as rocks the waves ; which push the night marches, and sustain the campaign. I think of them as laborers most reliable in God's vineyard, undiscouraged under the burden and heat of the day. I do thank Christianity for educating and consecrating so much common intellect to the service of God ; for moving so vast a power as this, in furtherance of God's great interests.

The services of evangelical minds, moving in learned spheres, are more marked and various.

These are, first, the students of the exact sciences ; the skilled in number and quantity ; the algebraists and geometers ; the measurers and weighers of the material worlds ; the explorers of the earth and the heavens ; the geologists, naturalists, philosophers, chemists, astronomers ; the writers on mental and moral sciences ; the literary authors and historians ;—these Christianity having converted, employs each in his own order, in great good services in behalf of truth and righteousness. Even the lighter contributions of intellect in the adorned walks of literature, religiously imbued, are not without their substantial influence upon the cause of Christ. Like the lighter foliage of our trees, they elaborate nutrition for solid trunks and strong roots. God no doubt values highly these beautiful, sprightly, ever-ready auxiliaries.

History, when instinct with the true Christian spirit, He must specially love for its intellectual aid to religion, as an interpreter of Divine Providence.

God in Christian history, is God not in clouds and darkness, not in repellent and reserved majesty, not in distant, silent immensity, but God descended upon the earth ; moving among the nations ; employing visibly and effectively every one of his mighty attributes ; setting up and pulling down ; turning and overturning ; pouring abroad prosperity ; executing judgment ; declaring his righteousness ; walking in his omnipotence ; intimating his counsels of wisdom ; unveiling the heart of everlasting love ; carrying forward in a grand, resistless course, individuals, families, nations, to the consummation of his own exalted purposes. God in heaven, with all his glory around him, is a moral power scarcely more vast and impressive than God thus visibly presented in Christian history, as everywhere operating, instructing, giving commandments, punishing transgression, glorifying righteousness. Evangelical history writes the acts of a grand tragedy, where the mighty principles of religion are seen in their struggles and triumphs while in contest with the prince of the power of the air. It is a work great and praiseworthy, which is done for God in the world by historic minds sound and cordial in the truth.

There is another class of writers, found in the higher walks of literature, who, when brought by Christianity cordially into the sphere of religion, also accomplish noble things. I refer to Christian poets. The poetical element is a goodly part of all humanity. True poetry wakes a throbbing response as unfailingly in the heart of man, as winds above arouse the waters beneath, deep answering to deep.

Even with the rude and uncultivated, it is so, that the thought and grace and power existing in poetic creations, reproduce themselves largely amid the indwelling vivacities of the soul.

It is *that* poetry which is inspired and warmed by a Christian spirit, that, of all efforts in this department, is fitted to exert the deepest and most enduring general influence. It is this especially which Christianity secures to her own service. How well able and fitted the divine art is to become the eloquent, appropriate bearer and advocate of religious truths, appears from the splendid instances in which it is so employed in the Scriptures.

David, who wrote better lyrics than any before or after him ; Job, who has given us a higher order of the didactic than either ancient or modern genius ; Jeremiah, the author of an elegiac of deeper tenderness than the world elsewhere has seen ; Solomon, who in the proverbial and pastoral rivals all writers ; Isaiah, who surpasses Homer and Milton in fire, originality and grandeur ;—these all show that poetry happily conceives, comprehends, enrobes, publishes the richest virtues and the mightiest thoughts which God communicates to man.

Christian poets are great divines. Watts and Milton were more effective preachers than many of their contemporaries in the pulpit. Consecrated poetry is God's auditor—the spectator of his unfolded wisdom and omnipotence—an admirer of his majesty and munificence. It is a student and interpreter of his works and his providence. It sitteth with the Deity upon the circle of the earth, as he openeth the valleys, and spreadeth out the

curtains of the heavens—walketh with him in his ways of dealing and distribution to the families and the nations which be upon the earth. It has a storehouse of images and graphic words to present impressively the whole outward scene of divinity, which it so visits and loves. It bears intense conceptions of spiritual things, of duty, of mercy, of immortality, which, under God, offer noble resistance to many vanities and sins of human society. Evangelical poetry becomes an essential coadjutor to God, by communicating to religious character and action its own earnest and vivacious spirit. It has nothing phlegmatic or dull ; it shines, it sparkles, it warms. It thinks, it is true—thinks deeply, seriously—but thinks inspiringly ; when made the organ and nuncio of religion, carries its declarations and claims and spiritualities to mankind, not as if dealing with cold facts, mathematical verities, accuracies of physical science ; but with a whole-hearted enthusiasm that will wake and animate the coldest regions of moral apathy—enter the most forbidding human spirit, and create a soul under the ribs of death. In setting apart to God poetic talent, Christianity has provided a most animating and vitalizing agency. We have dead mind, dead heart, dead religion enough ; we need life, pulsation, stir. Often has it occurred, when a speaker has lulled his hearers into a heavy languor and lethargy, that a scrap of rich, life-breathing poetry, has started up the whole intellect of the audience on tip-toe to catch the eloquence. True religious poetry may doubtless much assist to communicate a beautiful life and power and inspiration to all religious truths

and religious services. As in old Scripture times, so it must ever be one of God's choice assistants in the world.

Another portion of literary mind, appropriated by Christianity to the divine service, is public eloquence. Each of the three kinds of speaking ordinarily described—that of the Bar, that of the Popular Assembly, and that of the Pulpit—carries a power, which has in every age been readily acknowledged. Christianity can permeate and secure the whole to itself. The pulpit, however, it claims peculiarly as its own. So much mind as it leads up thither, is placed in the highest seat of influence known on earth.

The intellect which Christianity has endowed with spiritual life and introduced into the sacred desk is, it is true, but a small portion of the extended solid mass of mind belonging to a large community. But so much as is thus employed is invested with very unusual facilities, and placed in very advantageous circumstances, to do good things. The pulpit-speaker addresses men on those moral interests on which their own consciences had spoken before with intense emphasis, with stern authority. The weapons which he wields are *truths* and *facts*, than which the Divine Mind knows none more vast and momentous ; are *principles* unchangeable as the pillars of heaven, on which God conducts his own great affairs ; are *motives* which the Divinity himself obeys ; are *interests* which are transcendent, immeasurable, infinite. He brings messages which involve all good, all evil ; all time, all eternity. He brings messages from Jehovah. His voice is

the voice of God. Does he inculcate human duty? "Thus saith the Lord," is his high authority. Does he declare the doom of the wicked? It is God from Sinai that thunders the penalty. Does he proclaim forgiveness? From Heaven's own throne comes the announcement of mercy.

Incalculable, unknown is the power of the pulpit. It is the grand recruiting station for the great King. Intellect, placed by Christianity in this sacred place, stands midway between heaven and earth, and, like the trumpet of the archangel, utters an awaking call, that draweth after it resurrection and life. Such are the occupations and efficiencies of that intellect which Christianity introduces into the service of God.

In behalf of physical, intellectual and moral regenerations, the powers of the understanding, Christianly moulded and exalted, are certainly a very powerful and well-adapted agency. They are constructed precisely and perfectly for the work assigned to them by religion. They have not the right sympathies and forces to remodel the angels, to recover devils, to kindle holy qualities in beings without conscience and moral sensibility. But to act on man, fallen semblance of the Deity, fallen but not already doomed, not hopeless; to act on man, conscience-stricken, capable, struggling, fearful, longing; to act on such a dilapidated, undestroyed, convicted, aspiring being, evangelized mental faculties are altogether fitted and surprisingly effective. The book which shall present adequately the religious potencies and achievements of these faculties in behalf of men, is yet to be written.

Contemplate the intellectual powers developed towards the great truth-forms, godly duties, and glorious life of religion; emancipated from error, misdirection, waste, lethargy; withdrawn from the superficial and visionary; occupied with depths and riches and unshadowy realities; waked to giant vitality and achievement. Then contemplate the same powers all vigorously at work on God's enterprises, under God's own eye and patronage. Contemplate the minds of an age thus submitted to the sovereign will of Heaven, to do that will. The intellectual awaking, growth, holy engagement, possess a truly sublime interest.

The Sun of righteousness on his passage hereafter around the world will nowhere look upon a grander scene! O Christianity, we reverence thy power over the great intellect of humanity! thy prerogative to commit it all to God!

III. Christianity also proposes to submit to the care and direction of the Deity the power belonging to the sensibilities of our nature. To this it is entirely competent.

In order to an eventual consecration of the whole moral spirit of man to God, the gospel carries on incipiently a transforming process upon what is impure and injurious in the human heart.

First, are the appetites. These require a stronger check and a narrower boundary than anything else belonging to our interior nature. Pushed either in a wrong direction, or yielded to extravagance in a right one, the effect is prostration of intellect, convulsion of reason, a general demoralization and

paralysis of the spirit. Until all these are reduced, therefore, to cleanliness and moderation and deference to virtue, there can be no right, unembarrassed and vigorous religious action.

There is also a class of passions usually regarded of higher character, somewhat, than these sensual appetites, whose subjugation is likewise prerequisite in order to the presentation of the full power of the heart to God. Among these are covetousness, envy, wicked ambition, misanthropy.

Covetousness is constituted of self-love and self-care pushed to such deep intensity and such extravagant excess, as to pay very little willing respect to any laws of God or of man which may be in its way. Its constant tendency is to grow into an absorbing, grasping, insatiable, remorseless voracity, which will seize and hoard all that suits its appetite, with scarcely an inquiry, a care, or a conscience, as to how much ownership may be violated, or how many and how prized may be the interests sacrificed. A heart drank up with such a ravenous passion, bent on the possessions of its neighbors ; on cutting off their acres, occupying their buildings, opening their thrift into its own treasures ; such a heart is a poor fountain of useful influence, a stinted spiritual contributor. Covetousness, in a heart intended for God's service, is a thief in the specie vault ; an obstruction in the arteries from the reservoirs which refresh the population.

Equally disqualified to act in the cause of Heaven, is a heart corroded with envy. This passion is a malicious dissatisfaction at the sight of superior excellence, reputation or happiness possessed by

another ; a repining at being outstripped and outshone, with a rankling hatred of the successful rival. Chagrinned by seeing other athletic spirits shoot by him and plant their feet where he meant to plant his own, on the topmost platform, the defeated man turns to accomplish his purpose in another method, and that a most dishonorable and unrighteous one. He seeks to stand above his compeers ; not by kindling afresh the fires of his own mind ; not by bending his powers to a mightier struggle ; not by independent self-evolutions and self-advancements ; not by a steady, resistless march over all obstacles, up all ascents, through all obscurities, beyond all pioneer trails ;—not by these honorable exertions, but by pulling back and pulling down competitors ; by hanging weights on their advancement ; by sending a poisoned arrow to the heart of the honest hope which inspires them ; by throwing a cloud over their merit, and a suspicion over their fame.

This evil-eyed, ill-humored discontent, which would bring down what it cannot surpass, and extinguish what it cannot eclipse, most decidedly unfits the heart in which it reigns to aid and abet the cause of God. The great life and spirit of that cause is the generous charity that is not puffed up, that thinketh no evil, that seeketh not her own ; that, if an enemy, hunger feedeth him ; if he thirst, gives him drink ; that overcometh evil with good.

Misanthropy, is another substantial disqualification for God's service. Composed, as this passion is, of proud self-subsistence and self-communing ; of sickly sensitiveness to the sharp edges of society ;

of unsocial, unsympathizing, uncharitable, hard-hearted, self-willed contempt of the world, plainly there must be a total ejection of its sour humors and icy elements before the heart can prompt and effect good services for the Heavenly Father. The inner life hid with Christ in God ; the vitality of all religious doing, if it exist at all, will be as a phosphorescence in a bank of snow. Great-heart, before he takes into the warm enclosure of his spirit, all God's interests, all God's creatures, and breathes a prayer and a blessing for them, must have this frigid, sterile misanthropy, cleared thoroughly out.

Unholy ambition, a compound of the love of renown and the love of power, is another passion necessary to be extirpated before the energies of the soul can be in a fair condition for the service of Heaven.

This vaulting passion drives the ploughshare of ruin over the fairest portions of the world. It turns men into Ishmaelites. It reigns in the human heart from early childhood to the extremest age—from the tiny rival for maternal caresses, up to the contender for a throne.

The speciality of its unfitness for religious service, is not so much that over the whole face of society it produces such a struggling of human spirits for mastery and power ; but that the whole contest is pushed without a throb or a prayer for any thing but personal aggrandizement ; that it has no mercy and no forgiveness for any man, action or event, which obstructs the designs of its inflexible ambition ; that its strides are over that very truth and

equity and happiness and order, to abet which God asks for the heart of humanity.

These are a few of the bad passions which unfit the spirit to work in God's service. In like manner are they all an obstruction, and a perversion, and a corruption, and a palsy in the hidden man of the heart.

Happily, Christianity lays the axe at the root of every one of them. It proposes to expurgate the moral nature of them thoroughly. Its special business is this ; to enter the human heart filled with these evil spirits ; with insolent selfishness, monstrous recklessness of human rights, gaunt rapacity, grinding oppression ; to enter and cast them all out, and seat men at the feet of Jesus in their right mind. In its process upon the spirit, religion first combats these corruptions by presenting the limit which they must not pass ; the restraints they must not resist ; the objects they must not touch ; then, by a direct injunction against them all, so unconditional, so imperative none can mistake, overlook or forget the obligation.

Next, it makes an appeal to conscience against them in such terms of intelligibleness and reiteration, that only finished depravity can disregard it. It refers also to bitter consequences so earnestly, so confidently, that men can but feel and know assuredly that ruin and suffering will as inevitably attend the violation of laws of purity and temperance and justice, as they will the laws of electricity and attraction ; that they can no more sink into sensual indulgence and wicked passion without stopping the pulsations of moral life, than plunge into the depth

of the ocean without suppressing the breath. The Spirit of God, in the use of many instrumentalities, is another purifying power upon these interior lusts and passions. This is competent to modification, constraint, eradication.

A heart, with its impure, strong propensities in these ways, removed and hushed by religion, could it be well described, would present a transformation of very remarkable and valuable character. The change would not be merely that gross sensuality and bad passions were suppressed, and general moral filth washed away. It would not be this alone ;—it would be, that on all the ground from whence these had been cleared away, every thing blessed, every thing delightful to moral taste, had been afforded root-hold and fair opportunity to spring up and grow.

The cleansing, therefore, though chiefly negative, is nevertheless, in the business of submitting the whole heart's power to God, radical and deeply important. It is removal of what was paralyzing one half the soul ; is throwing off from it disease, weight, suffocation ; is leaving the spirit free for convalescence, clear to be aroused, electrified, divinely employed ; the operation is like the clearing off of winter snows, scorching lava rather, to open prolific soil underneath for seeds and germs and vegetation and luxuriant life.

Next, Christianity provides directly for the germination and maturity of those excellent affections, which, pledged and acting in the service of God, are his most efficient auxiliaries. Among these, is the love of the superior. This is indeed capable of

vast mischiefs, in case it is pushed to inordinate intensity and is made obedient to depraved promptings. But when rightly controlled, made pure, set to operate and advance and attain just as religion dictates, it becomes an impulsion of great efficiency and great value.

This excelsior principle has just the spirit and movement which God loves in his co-workers. Abhorrent to it, is travel in a circle; action that does not accomplish; acquisition that does not accumulate. Its tendency is to the more, the greater, the richer. It would emerge; it would advance; it would gather and concentrate; it would push right boldly among rival adventurers; heavenward looking, it would reach unclimbed elevations; amid all things in motion, it would rush to the front and stand on the very verge of all good progress. This stalwart, aspiring activity, I have said, has Heaven's special sympathy. He that carrieth this spirit is a chosen vessel unto God. So long as under the grace and guiding of religion, man would rise to the superior, the powerful, the renowned, the accomplishing; so long as he seeks to do it on his own basis, without sinning against others, without any neglect of personal, social, and public duty, he is just the stirring, expanding, attaining, adventuring being God needs for his enterprises. Heaven wishes every man to burn with desire to be the most potent, the most intelligent, the most effective, as well as the most pure aggregation of humanity of which humanity is capable.

Closely connected with the desire of personal advancement and superiority, is a love of true

excellence out of one's self—of all true excellence, wherever recognized; a hearty sympathy with all struggles, especially all successful struggles for eminent worth, by whomsoever made. Into every spirit, which Christianity enters, it carries and settles a large infusion of this noble, disinterested zeal to see the true, the good, the magnanimous, reigning in all brother hearts.

The essential basis of this generous feeling, is sympathy with man. This, regenerated by Christianity, takes the highest form of philanthropy, viz: a desire for the religious excellence and well-being of all humanity. Active advances, on the part of fellow men in true virtue, intellectual opulence, godly wisdom, useful influence, the disciple of religion hails and welcomes with an honest gratification almost as deep and warm and unmixed as if the rich attributes were all his own. With a pen of iron, Christianity has written upon every heart which it has made a servant of God: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The injunction is never to be mitigated nor made void. Ever and evermore is a tide of human sympathy and love to throb along the current of the heart's moral life.

It is worthy of remark, that the most warm and living enthusiasm, the most remarkable spirit of onwardness and enterprise, the broadest strides toward noble doing belonging to men, are those to which Christianity awakes all its converted friends in behalf of the spiritual recovery of the race. Let us glory in the fact. This is owing to the large principles of philanthropy on which Christianity educates the heart. 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor

as thyself.' But may it not be sufficient that we are benignant to the community we associate with, never interfere with their rights, incidentally do them kindnesses, occasionally in their exigencies perform special services, that we live mainly however unto ourselves? For who will live for us and look after us, if we ourselves are delinquent here. Some interstices, a few extraordinary exertions for other men, but the great current and burden of life for ourselves exclusively. Will not this do? This do! Simply bland in manner; merely uninjuring; incidentally charitable; occasionally ministering to those in deep adversity. This do! It will not do at all! As *thyself*, saith the injunction. The love and the blessing which you hold for yourself, the same go and drop upon the heart of fellow men. This is the measure and quality of the charity which the gospel breathes into the children whom it joins by adoption unto God's family. He but half lives, according to the New Testament, who lives only to himself. He does not live at all, just exists, like the oyster on his rock. Guided by that directory, we are to be so associated in heart with other men, as to joy in their joys, sorrow in their sorrows, live in their lives.

The injunction of the Savior, *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*, has still more meaning. By his own interpretation, the term *neighbor* includes every creature of God that needeth a blessing and can be blessed. Christianity here instructs the hearts of her disciples to take home to their warmest charities and prayers every fellow man, on whatever side of the globe, under whatever latitude, of what-

ever nation, politics, religious faith he may be found. Thus doth Christianity set the heart of man to throbbing along with the heart of everlasting love, in behalf of all that wear his form, and circulate life currents filled by the same Heavenly Father. Thus does it create a spirit in man which sends him abroad with both hands full of all that can bless and endow human existence ; which sends him especially with proffers of salvation, in the name of Christ, to the worldly and graceless, who are wont to enter no churches, to read no Bibles, to listen to no mercy. Under the gospel, there is flesh in man's obdurate heart ; man is not all inhumanity to man. Heart does meet heart ; does warm and grieve at the call of sorrow and need ; if another be burdened, feels itself the pressure ; if he be delivered, exults in the emancipation.

When in 1819 it was announced that there was among the Greeks, in the old land of heroic and classic recollections, a smothered spirit of freedom, and a waking struggle to escape from under their oppressors and plant liberal institutions in the very valleys where liberty, ages ago, had breathed so healthily :—when this was proclaimed and known in the United States, almost immediately an answering enthusiasm was found to be beating at the heart of our population. The sympathy passed from the sea-board to the interior, kindling as it went. Arms and ammunition and money were proffered generously. The American Congress took up the theme ; her noblest orators and statesmen thrilled the country with appeals in behalf of the land of Pericles and Leonidas, Plato and Demosthenes. Other lands

felt the stirring excitement. The chivalric and brave and titled rushed to the scene of conflict. Other instances of famine and distress abroad have aroused the great mass of the people, and ships been freighted to bear their spontaneous munificence to the sufferers. So are we constructed. The dwellers in distant quarters of the globe, when they need, as well as our nearer neighbors, can elicit and share our substantial sympathy.

If such be the ardors and fruits of our native, original feeling of kindness and brotherhood, remarkable and illustrious must be the services wrought by the affection and fraternity of the gospel. Christian fellow feeling is a deep fountain in the heart ; there is not a wreck of humanity it will not pity ; there is not an infected prison it will not enter ; there is not a pestilential climate nor an inhospitable shore it will not visit ; there is no peril of robbers, nor peril of the sea, nor peril of false brethren, nor hunger, nor thirst, it will not hazard in behalf of human redemption. Certainly, Heaven has not a mightier coadjutor on the earth than man's feeling for man, when baptized under Christianity with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

There is also a passion for immortality which Christianity encourages and then appropriates, as a valuable power, to the cause of God. The desire for continued existence is a native, ardent, universal passion. It is as inherent and inseparable an attribute of the human soul as the understanding or the will. Christianity adds a religious element, and makes the irrepressible longing, a deep and expanded aspiration, for an eternal purity, an eternal well-doing and well-being.

When we mark how the natural love of even an earthly immortality prompts men to great energies, to signal deeds of heroism and magnanimity, to high intellectual achievements, to the erection of pillars and cities for memorials, we perceive that this passion, cleansed and exalted into a quenchless thirst for the mental and moral life of an eternity in heaven, must be a commanding influence in the spirit of man ; must grow into an inspiration able to stir his heart to its deepest intensity, and awake his active faculties to their largest possible power. Aspirations borne forward to range over the eternal ; emotions sent to rest upon the bosom of the infinite, come back to impress upon the heart that issued them, both the grandeur and the perfections of the eternity and infinitude with which they have communed. Over a Christian soul so impressed, the fleetingness and nothingness of this scene have little control. The glorious and illimitable almost exclusively occupy, uplift, expand its emotions.

This love of immortality is not, when Christianized, a simple desire of the spirit for its own endless life in God ; but a deep, indwelling interest in the endless life in God of all fellow-spirits. In this way does it become the inspirer of an important religious activity.

Men intensely conscious of their own heavenly immortality, and profoundly in love with it, will act with an inextinguishable earnestness in behalf of fellow-men destined also to live forever ; in behalf of fellow-men under an eternal government ; invested with eternal duties ; constructed for eternal purity ; susceptible of eternal happiness ; exposed

to eternal woes. What ardor of zeal and action, what pressure of responsibility attends the man who knows he is doing now, and is constantly to do hereafter, eternal deeds in behalf of eternal spirits. He is in fact, and he feels himself to be, an associate operator with the Deity, in a sphere crowded with objects immeasurable and interests unending and infinite. His whole great soul is given to the Lord's service.

Were an entire community, by being pervaded with a regenerated passion for immortality, to join hands with the Almighty, and to act under the influence of all the inspiring, transcendent immunities lying in the eternal heavens ; O there would be energies and accomplishments in the work of investing God's creatures with God's own eternal purity, which Christ himself would bend from his throne to witness with infinite interest !

These are a portion only of the susceptibilities and affections capable of good work in the cause of God. There are other large moral powers : as a reverent and filial regard to Jehovah ; a passion for a religious immortality ; a sensitive conscientiousness. Christianity having worked the heart into these affections also, then occupies them in the active service of Heaven.

In these methods it is that Christianity forms and persuades the heart of man to consecrate itself to the Almighty, and then to cherish and further his benevolent designs on the earth. The entire moral spirit of the world, it is the work of Christianity to bring to a willing acknowledgment of the King of the world ; to a surrender of all its treasury of

power to his wisdom and will. The depth and extent of might and efficiency, to be so surrendered, was never yet measured. In the human sensibilities are found the emanating vitalities of all that rises and acts on this earthly theatre. Christianity, in making its conquest of these sentient powers for the great Sovereign, has carried the capital—has seized the government—has completed the subjugation of the kingdom. A victory over the heart is a victory every where. The fount of feeling stirred, every other faculty of man, physical and mental, is awaked and put into high condition for action. This storehouse of propulsions, the human heart, unreached, unmoved,—all the man is a tree without juices, ship-tackle without wind, a locomotive without locomotivity.

Sensibilities, then, are the grand stimuli which circulate like a life through the lungs and muscles and nerves of all activity. There are, indeed, valuable tributaries, collateral subsidies, but these are the originating, predominant forces, which create movement on the surface of the world. When there is an earthquake underneath human affairs, or an upheaval above, these are the interior fires. When a government is revolutionized, and a nation made to rock from side to side, these are the insurgent agitators. When the tides of men overrun their boundaries and submerge surrounding peoples, these are the agents which over-heat humanity and swell the inundation.

The heart being, under God, the real mover of all that moves ; the inspirer of all that is awaked ; the originator of all that is undertaken ; the reason

appears wherefore we said a victory over the heart is a victory every where ; wherefore we now say, when the heart is made a consecration to Heaven, all is consecrated, the last item of influence is at the feet of Christ, and beareth God company to the world's families and the world's religious movements. The magnitude and value of the power which is laid at Christ's feet and assists God's movements, when this immense life and excitement is made an obedient, devout, available servant of the Most High, we have said, has not been measured. Only in heaven, can it be conceived. To make this bow down to God, that makes so much bow down to itself, is certainly a great achievement of the gospel.

After these manners does the Christian religion assume to take the physical, intellectual, and moral power of the world, and present it to the Almighty. So doth the very power itself, as it bows cordially before Him, breathe the prayer, " Thy kingdom come, thy will be done." In this character, as holding the prerogative of committing to the service of Heaven the immeasurable forces of which we have spoken, Christianity is an agency on the earth of transcendent interest. What, that even the Divinity could conceive desirable, will not attend upon its accomplishments. Blessed Christianity! speed thee to thy great work in the world. We hail thy triumphs !

IV. The occasion seems to require that we turn our thoughts to a single inference, arising from these observations, in respect to results to be expected from our missions to the heathen world. Bearing

with them wherever they go this Christianity, which is able to bring and submit to the divine Being all physical, all intellectual, all moral power, what condition of man and society they will establish in pagan nations seems an easy conclusion.

This condition may be best illustrated by a brief reference to some well-known heathen country. Hindoostan shall be our example. Wherever in this fertile and densely populated peninsula Christian missions are planted, there arise under them, first, large physical transformations and advantages. Improvements and facilities in agriculture, manufactures, transportation and domestic comforts, elements of the secular civilization ever attendant upon Christianity, are introduced at the point of perfection to which centuries of progress had already pushed them at home. They appear, therefore, in a state of high advancement very speedily, almost without an infancy and a growth.

Let us for a moment pass forward half a century, and suppose Protestant missions to be widely and permanently established in India, and to have worked out their legitimate results, and then mark the physical position which the country has reached. We perceive steam power extensively employed to aid the heavier operations of life. We find steam-vessels plying on the Ganges, the Indus and Burram-pooter, freighted with the imports and exports of the large and rich valleys traversed by those rivers. We find the smaller streams, the bays, straits and sea-coast, animated with a thrifty commerce.

We discover, also, that Hindoostan has become extensively a manufacturing country. The Him-

alaya mountains on the north, and the eastern and western Ghauts extending almost the whole length of the peninsula from north to south, give rise to streams and waterfalls sufficient to drive as much machinery as is now used by the civilized world. The raw material needed for nearly every species of manufacture, is as abundant as the power afforded for working it into the forms of human utility. Minerals are inexhaustible in the mountains ; the cotton crop of Hindoostan is equal to that of any country of the world ; silk is an increasing product of the northern latitudes.

This grand supply of power and material we see placed in the hands of industry and of skill to work for the population. The perfected products, in every form of use and comfort and luxury, are sufficient for the country, besides affording a surplus for exportation. Coimbtoore, on the Cavery, is the Sheffield of Southern, Lahore the Birmingham of Northern India. Locomotives and cars, and every description of machinery, are floated from the latter place down the Indus, and thence by canal to the whole valley of the Ganges. Cotton fabrics, though produced in every part of the country, are most extensively wrought in the district of Mysore lying in the inverted delta between the Ghauts.

A more distinguishing feature still of Hindoostan arrests us ; its railroads. The favorable face of the country to these thoroughfares has encouraged the extension of them over every important portion of it. Through the heart of every hundred thousand of its population, there lies one of these communications. Electric wires also intersect the

land scarcely less generally. Domestic arrangements and comfort partake of the common improvement.

Agriculture presents us with more visible improvements, if possible, than any other branch of industry. The exchange of worthless implements for the best tools and machines of modern husbandry ; the adoption of scientific and superior modes of culture ; the waking the whole population to habits of industry and economy and thrift, augment the agricultural products of Hindoostan more than a hundredfold. Beautiful is the scene of skillful tillage, abounding harvests, contented cottages, thrifty villages, opulent cities, spread out under Christian missions in India. Literally the hills are covered with flocks, and the valleys with corn ; the increase of the earth is fat and plenteous ; the whole land seems enriched as with the river of God, which is full of water ; the ridges thereof are watered abundantly ; the furrows are made soft with showers ; blessed is the springing thereof ; the year is crowned with goodness ; its paths drop fatness upon the green pastures, and cause the little hills to rejoice on every side ; the valleys and the mountains shout for joy—they also sing.

This vision is not *all* a vision. It is not a vision at all. It is a sober, just anticipation of what will be a matter of reality in Hindoostan, when Christian missions shall hereafter bring the physical power of the country under divine prompting and supervision. They that send missionaries, and the missionaries themselves that are sent, have only to open their eyes upon the transformations occurring

under missionary influence, and they will witness actually present, these very fruits and harvests, this very employment of natural forces, these very products of the spindle, and shuttle, and forge, and rolling mill, and wheel, and boiler, and gas-chamber; these very facilities and accelerations of exchange and travel.

Similar to these, are the physical results in all other pagan lands. If we would call up a picture of the grand changes to be wrought by Protestant missions in China, and Japan, and Tartary, and Africa, and the Islands of the sea, we have only to turn to Hindoostan, as these missions entered it—lazy, ill-supplied, comfortless, unenterprising, stationary, mendicant, powerless; and then look at Hindoostan as these missions have made it, with its railroads, and steam-ship navigation, and telegraphic wires, and manufactories, and interchanges, and universal activity, and luxuriant fields, and physical plenty, and rational enjoyments, and strong advancements. That is the picture.

Essentially the same will be the transformations and benefits, physically, wherever among men missions shall send down their roots. There is, we again insist, no extravagance in this picture of the physical condition and arrangements which will occur every where under the divine influence of missions. In truth, this is but a faint view. Were the whole present civilization of the world to be drawn under the eye in one general scene; and were the same supposed to be reproduced over all heathen nations; even *this* would be but a partial representation of the great final results which mis-

sions propose to themselves, and are perfectly able to reach. For the world is ever making advancements, and Christianity and Christian missions will always be found on the outmost edge of progress and improvement. It would be well for all the friends of Protestant missions, before finishing their estimate of them, to contemplate the amazing physical changes and improvements which they are to effect in pagan countries. It would be well to do this, before the amount of their donation is determined on for the present year. What a garden missions are yet to make of the waste places of this earth! How safe, in the hand of God, will they make all its vast material power—how accomplishing! A glorious world this will be, as a physical scene, when missions shall have done their whole work. I plead for these missions, as bearing a grand outward regeneration. This powerful, abounding, physical world! It has material capabilities enough for fifty such populations as it now supports. It must be planted all over with missions right speedily, and support and bless such accumulated millions.

The action of missions on the intellectual condition of the heathen world is of still greater interest, and of still higher consequences. Referring again to Hindoostan, we call on the imagination a moment to present the mental triumphs and consecrations effected there by Christian missions. As over the whole mind of this broad land there sit, settled and sanctioned by unreckoned ages, a profound ignorance and nearly every conceivable form of religious sophism and absurdity, it is important with

missions to reach the *intellect* of the people with illumination and disenthralment.

In pursuing this purpose, missionary wisdom does not stop to decide whether christianization or civilization, the illumination of the understanding or the subjugation of the heart, should precede, in order best to accomplish its object. Whichever goes ahead, it well knows, draws on the other, and is itself pushed in turn, like engines at both ends of a train. While Christian missions in India, therefore, lose no opportunity of direct and immediate religious inculcation upon the most utterly benighted, they also with assiduous care give themselves to the establishment of schools of every grade, wherever means will allow and pupils can be gathered.

The educational result, we may suppose, in our vision of the eventual effect of missions, is most happy. There is removed a vast amount of silent prejudice, huge falsehood, brooding ignorance. A still larger sum of sound intelligence is diffused over the country, to enrich its families. The older people, it is true, obtain but glimpses of knowledge. Luminous as is the region of education around them, their minds, so long and deeply dark, admit only a few dim and isolated rays. But the young generation approaching to constitute the community, is largely instructed and fed and invigorated with treasures of truth.

Broken up is the system of caste, which for ages has placed inter-strata between different classes of Hindoo society, and fastened them as unchangeably as layers of rock do fossil remains. The coolie and sepoy are regarded by missionaries accessible

and interesting subjects of instruction and development, equally with the Brahmin, the Nabob, and the Subadar. While formerly, high ranks only had been educated, only these been permitted to read the Vedas and great poems, India, under missions, becomes comparatively a country of popular education and general intelligence. There are few events of more interest to a true philanthropist, than the resuscitation and emergence of so vast a mass of imprisoned and shrouded intellect. It is almost like the coming up of a continent to sunlight and fertility, out of waters that had covered it for ages.

Christian missions have not stopped here, with an ordinary education. Under their influence have risen colleges, law schools, medical institutions, theological seminaries. Geological cabinets, specimens of natural history, apparatus for the illustration of the natural sciences, are appurtenances of these universities. Astronomical observations are revealing new wonders in the heavens. In several of the most populous portions of the country, philosophical societies for the encouragement of scientific research, are established and prosperously sustained. Skillful geological surveys are carefully pushed through every accessible district. Mineral and agricultural resources, which seem to be without assignable limits, are laid open to the enterprise of the age.

Under those liberal forms of government, ever resulting eventually from Protestant missions, there have risen philosophers, senators, statesmen, jurists, physicians, divines, of distinguished genius, learning and eloquence. A literature has arisen among

the Hindoos, which, if not remarkable for power, has, besides an Eastern grace and sprightliness, an eminent scripturalness, that renders it singularly attractive and useful.

The Bible has come among the people from the hand of the missionaries with the charm of novelty ; it seems to them just now descended from heaven. It is full of Eastern imagery. Eastern are its cities and villages, and valleys of corn, and cattle upon the hills, and vineyards, and threshing-floors, and cedars, and olives, and tents, and herds, and nomadic life. The population are drawn to the Scriptures warmly, and their thoughts and descriptions have largely and pleasantly the spirit and tone and form of the Sacred Writings. Scriptural simplicity, directness, proverbial and parabolic illustration, pureness, faithfulness of rebuke, richness of instruction, characterize the literature which overspreads the land, and visits its schools and fire-sides.

Such are the science and beautiful literature of India after Protestant missions have been planted there, and have issued upon the population their wonted and legitimate influences, and have brought out the masses of its intellect to walk with God and receive inspiration from the fire of his altars. In our admiration of the intellectual condition of Hindoostan, let not our thoughts be at all diverted from the fact now before us, that Christian missions have done this work ; that they are the chosen godly agency which overspreads this broad territory of intellect, with schools, and colleges, and libraries, and observatories, and general education, and univer-

sal intelligence, and eminent authorship, and learned professors, and successful discoverers, and wise legislators, and eloquent orators.

It is much to our purpose to suggest here, also, that what we have supposed to be wrought in behalf of the intellectual condition of the Hindoos, Protestant missions are competent and are destined to effect for the whole pagan population of the world. Standard productions of mind, under missionary influence in oriental countries, will rank well with those of western nations. They will assume, it is true, a specially adorned and imaginative character. The ideal will more prevail in philosophy ; the florid in eloquence and the supernatural in poetry ; but, in all their main qualities, they will be worthily classed with those works which admonish and lead on their age.

What cultivated peoples now present of the spirit of discovery and invention ; of logical argumentation and research ; of profound conceptions of life, of man, of God, of futurity ;—what each of them has produced in natural and mental philosophy, in chemistry, agriculture, theology, law, medicine, political economy, poetry, history, biography, travels ;—all these, Christian missions hold the philanthropic purpose and competency to produce for all that sit in darkness, of every kindred and nation and tongue and people. Actually and truly, Great Britain and the United States are to be reproduced, intellectually, upon all pagan countries ! To have done this, is glory enough !

Let missions, as God's instrumentality, have the glory ! Let them have all the high consideration

properly attached to the creation, amid the profound slumber and ignorance of heathenism, of such an illustrious intellectual scene! And it is, indeed, an illustrious scene. I would that the cold-hearted toward this enterprise might attain a just appreciation of the intellectual life and light which Protestant missions make to rise upon pagan death and darkness. The illumination poured upon the depth of night, by a grand nebular cluster, which had burst into the sky, would not be more signal and impressive.

This noble part of our missionary work, to kindle intellectual day upon all the chaos and gloom settled upon the nations, we abet full heartily. And we look to see all that love and value intellect ; all the literary and the poetic ; all that glory in the wonders of science ; all that bow before the creations of genius ;—we look to see all these throng up to join our enterprise of evangelical missions. It contains the very objects of their tastes and reverences and pursuits.

Friends of education, of learned research, of philosophy, of poetry, of art. Come to this sphere, where your preferences and powers will be all free and gratified and at home. Assist in presenting to the Deity, kindled and educated, the vast mind of the heathen world—the juvenile, the common, the strong, the gifted. It is an immense offering. What has a single thought effected ; what a single book ; what the intellectual life of a single mind. Half the world—all the world has felt its impulse—been pushed into other lines of thought ; changed its designs ; been nerved and strung anew ; been

reillumined! Christian missions take a position amid eight hundred millions of intellects, and seriously propose and undertake eventually to arouse and to educate them all, as also to proffer them to the Great King, with their resuscitated and augmented divine powers, with their capable present and eternal achievements. What man here feels the moving, warming, thrilling within him of a generous, large soul. Put your hand and head and heart to this august enterprise of evolving, instructing, exalting toward heaven, the vast expanse of mind now ignorant and slumbering upon the earth.

We pass to consider the *moral* conditions of society created in heathen countries through the action of Christian missions.

The heart of paganism, according to Paul, an open sepulchre, carrying the poison of asps, swift to shed blood, without natural affection ; the heart of paganism, according to all observation, impure, dark, chaotic, pestilental—this heart comes to possess, in its conversion to God, in consequence of the totality of darkness and completeness of ruin from which it emerges, an unusually joyous, trusting, thankful, hopeful character. In consequence of the opposition and persecution and derision and loss of all things, in the midst of which it is born unto God, the same heathen heart manifests a sincerity and depth and endurance and entirety and practicalness rarely equalled in Christian countries. It seems peculiarly convinced that doing good is better than sacrifice ; justice and love, than confidence and profession ; personal holiness, than religious

ecstacies ; sound obedience, than self-penances. These qualities appear in an unsophisticated affectionateness toward divine things ; an uncomplaining patience in labor for Christ's sake ; a frank cordiality to fellow disciples ; a guileless confidence in Scripture promises ; a devout earnestness of prayer ; a hearty, generous desire to see the waters of life flow all abroad to the destitute nations.

Among the changes in heathen lands ever attendant upon such pure and sound spiritualities, is the disappearance of native temples, once thick over the country, and the substitution in their place of Christian sanctuaries lifting their spires in equal number above the clustered cottages. Over all the territories of light, beautifully do these neat, unpretending structures adorn the scenery. As another change, idolatrous assemblages, disgusting with gross and superstitious observances, give place to the rest and stillness of consecrated Sabbaths and reverent services of intelligent worship. The plow is stopped in the furrow ; the wheel of manufacture is unbanded ; the boat upon canal and river is moored ; the locomotive is silent upon its track ; country and village and city are on the way up to the house of the Lord, to hear the words of eternal life.

Wherever missions have wrought their regenerations, Sabbath schools and Sabbath school libraries are training the impressible spirits of childhood. Firesides of devout prayer, of daily Scripture reading, of excellent example, of wholesome instruction, are creating a luxuriant soil of piety, and rearing up a blessedness, and light, and godliness, and

beneficence, and fellowship, and fear of the Lord, and good works, rarely out-rivaled in the most favored Christian countries.

As a special part of the change occurring under missionary influence, is the cherishing of many philanthropic enterprises. Just as here at home, Tract, Missionary, Bible, Sunday School Societies are actively performing their works of faith and labors of love. Christian presses are furnishing a healthful evangelical literature for the population. The chief city of religious solemnities annually gathers the benevolent and the eloquent to rejoice and thank God for past success, and to exchange new pledges and receive fresh impulses to the great work of the Lord. Auxiliary anniversaries, in smaller cities and villages, also express and augment the pure charities of Christianity. Ministers and office-bearers of the churches hold frequently their holy convocations.

Nor is this by any means an over-statement. Truly rich, very rich is the moral landscape which Christian missions spread out in heathen lands. And when these missions shall have been planted extensively over pagan countries, and shall have turned the heart of the people generally unto God, the present representation will be found very far within the reality. Religion will have reached a new and holier age ; piety attained a vaster power. There will be out-flowing a larger tide of charity ; there will be a purer scene of all good works upon the face of society. The Bible, the Sabbath, the clergy, will be exerting more powerful and saving influences. But again to the point of all these

observations, not for a moment to be overlooked. This vast moral regeneration is all the work of Christian missions. Fifty-eight centuries without them had failed. These, God's own ordained instrumentality, do not fail, cannot fail. We are to regard Protestant missions not only as charged but as wholly competent to plant good piety and fair morals wherever they are needed ; to plant them in more than three-fourths of the world's families.

This is a stupendous operation, that gives the gross, vile heart of heathenism to God ; that, with the gift, suppresses on the service of heathenism the over-reachings of avarice, the backbitings of slander, the deceits of dishonesty, the spittings of hate, the sensualities of depravity ; that overspreads the same surface of heathenism with the good ways of rectitude and charity and truth, with the quietness and assurance of righteousness, with the reverences and social virtues which God wishes to see established throughout his universe. It is more than stupendous. It is holy ! It is divine ! It is infinite !

Who is not a friend to the missionary movements which thus renew and reconstruct the immense heart and life of heathenism ? That man must be amazingly ignorant, or amazingly wicked. We appeal to all professed reformers, who would see men's corruptions and wrong doings removed ; we appeal to religionists, of every name and faith, who are devoted to the spiritual well-being of their race ; we appeal to all merchants, who are deeply concerned in the practical honesties of mankind ; we appeal to the whole body of physicians, who see in the vices

of men, seeds of disease and death—in conscientiousness and right living, curative virtues better than medicine ; we appeal to the great army of learned lawyers and venerable judges, who are pledged to the maintenance of even-handed justice and social integrity ; we appeal to every Christian, who loves and venerates moral excellence, who deeply warms toward the purity of his Bible, his Sabbath, his fellow disciple, his Redeemer, his heaven ;—to them all do we appeal, with great confidence, in behalf of the missionary enterprise, devoted as it is, on a grand scale, to the very ameliorations which they advocate ; devoted as it is, to the establishment of the best reforms, of the most dear and sacred human rights, of incorruptible honesty and honor, of pure-heartedness, of holy living, of heavenly worship. Reformers, physicians, civilians, Christians, may we not be assured there will be on your part no hesitation, and no reserve, in respect to missions ? that on whatever else you may feel indifference, you will be whole-hearted and wide awake toward these godlike movements ; that whatever else you leave to take care of itself, you will give these your money liberally, as also your best advocacy and your sincerest prayers ?

Such are the physical, intellectual and moral results produced upon heathen nations by Protestant missions as the bearers of Christianity. Protestant missions should be the first order of the day in the whole church of God. With enlarged, invigorated facilities, should they be furnished for the prosecution of their great design.

We honor and love Christian missions. We honor them for their great design and ability to effect a surrender to Jehovah of the entire power, treasured in the hand and intellect and heart of all the millions that lie in wickedness. An undertaking so vast, so hindered with obstacles, so permanent, so fraught with momentous consequences, has in no other instance been proposed in our world ; nor ever will be, under God's administration of the world's affairs. Man is a great being. He is of masterly powers. At his best, he is almost divine. We can scarcely forbear to bow with reverence before him. His capacities are not those of God indeed, but they make him a fit associate of the Deity ; they join him to God's nobility. We do honor and love Christian missions as bearing the sublime purpose of sanctifying and presenting to the Redeemer such gifted intelligences—nearly a world of them. Who can take due measurement of the vast achievement ! It is almost infinite ; it is quite infinite.

We here deliberately confirm our adoption of the enterprise of Christian missions. We thank God heartily, that as the friends of Christ we are permitted to undertake, personally, the recovery of the yet unrecovered of the race. Who so fitted to effect, under God, a regeneration, a disinthralment, a consecration, as the regenerated, the disinthralled, the consecrated themselves ? Who so well know when and how the revolted are approachable, vulnerable, conquerable ; who are so appreciative as they of the great change and transfer, when a human spirit of evil, a liege subject of the prince of dark-

ness, bows down to Jehovah and gives him its capacities, its service, henceforward living, dying, risen, glorified ?

As a work of difficulty and sacrifice, we thank God that he permits us to adopt it. Toils and obstacles are even attractions of the service. Exigency and struggle evolve, discipline, augment, exalt. Better for our virtue and our reward, are the journey and labor and fatigue and suffering of the wilderness, than an antediluvian life in the green pastures, beside the still waters, under the hanging vines of Canaan.

Intrusted, as God's people, with this enterprise, let us converge our lives to human redemption. Jehovah must be exalted in our world. Our missions, which are to exalt Him, must be taken close into the arms of the church till they feel the warmth and faith of her heart throbbing, glowing as a life all through them. Nothing less must she give to them than the whole vitalities of her spirit, and the whole strength of her arm. We are detached to the service of bringing man back and presenting to Jehovah, his god-like intellect, his vast heart, his powerful hand, his iron will, his entire being, his whole race. We to the missionary cause do pledge our love, our prayer, our charity, ourselves. Friends of Jesus, witness ! Witness, ye angels ! All heaven witness ! Holy Lord God, accept and seal our solemn, deliberate consecration !

Christian missionaries, the world with all its power, with all its amazing interests that hang upon that power, we have said must be given to God. It can be. It shall be. On your ensign is written,

“ Render unto God the things that are God’s.” A noble epitome and manifesto of your transcendent design. Under the holy banner stand ye up manfully to your warfare. The bones and dust of many must be laid on your field of action, but every fall will be the rising again of many in Israel. Fear not, therefore, sink not, sleep not in your struggle.

Disheartened, distrustful, are any? Turn to the records of Christian missions; to nations born in a day. Turn to the spectacle open around yourselves, of labors well performed; of obstacles removed; of difficulties overcome; of wide fields opening, opened; of new territories entered, won; of harvests ripened, reaped; of augmenting friends at home, risen to the world’s redemption.

Sometimes, after all, does the spirit faint. To wavering faith is the darkness too wide and too dense ever to be dissolved; the millions to be recovered too numerous ever to be reached and saved. But hearken to the word of the Lord: “The kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.” Yea, and hath God said and will he not perform it, saith the Lord? Wherefore strengthen ye the weak hands, confirm the feeble knees. Be strong. Still faint and dejected are ye under slight success, violent opposition, exhausting labor? Lo, I am with you, saith the Master, till the world shall end. It is enough. It is everything. Be of good heart, ye servants of the Lord! Moreover, Providence opens to you a cheering vision. Unmistakable gleamings there are even now of that coming light that shall

beam in upon every family of the earth. The heralding star is up. Night is waning. The morning breaketh. Work on in joy and hope.

The final consummation reached ; Jehovah exalted to reign ; the whole world subjugated affectionately, obediently before him, and all is done ! All might has passed from the oppressor to the Protector, from the corrupter to the Sanctifier, from the extinguisher of hope to the Giver of assurance and glory. Man is a sanctified intelligence ; earth is a suburb of heaven ; divine holiness is poured abroad over it all. It would be inspiring to be an occupant of the new earth, and stand amidst its unfolding regenerations and glories. Transporting it would be to hear and to join the triumphant ascription waking from all its families, “ Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” As the lofty anthem swells up from every nation and tribe and tongue, responsive peals forth the glorious psalm in heaven : heartier, warmer goes answering back the acclamation from the heart of the world ! The sublime recitative kindles, quickens, they have met and mingled—the hymn above and the hymn below ! Chorus of heaven and earth, shout on ! shout on ! For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth forever ! And let every creature of God say, Amen !

S E R M O N,

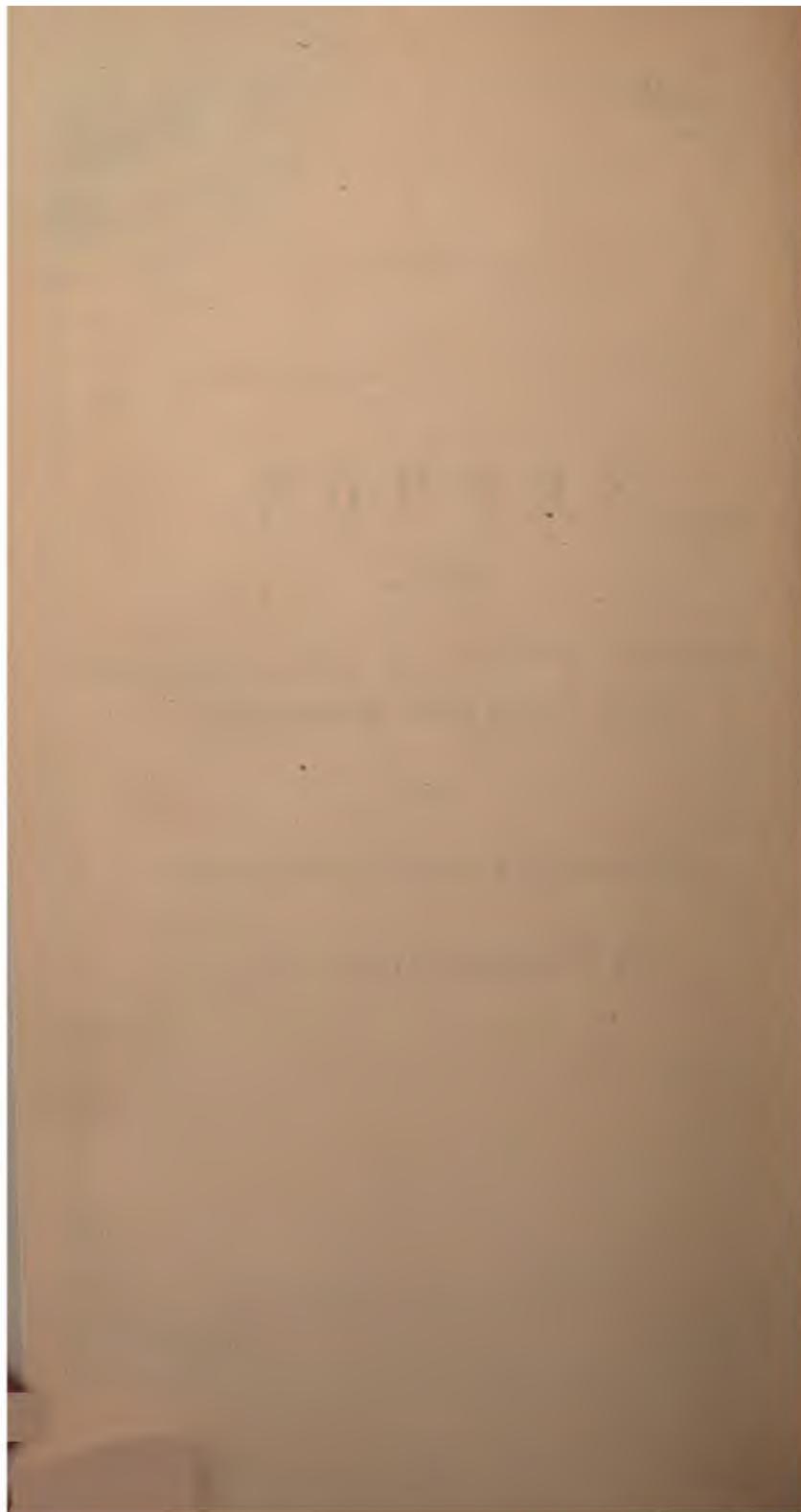
BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AT THEIR

FORTY-SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING.

BY NEHEMIAH ADAMS, D. D.,



The Power of Christian Gratitude.

A

S E R M O N,

Preached at Utica, New York, September 11, 1855,

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR

FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AT THEIR

FORTY-SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING.

BY NEHEMIAH ADAMS, D. D.,

Pastor of Essex Street Church, Boston.

BOSTON:

PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN, 42 CONGRESS STREET.

1855.

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

UTICA, N. Y., SEPT. 14, 1855.

Resolved, That the thanks of the Board be given to Rev. NEHEMIAH ADAMS, D. D., for his Sermon, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for the press.

Attest,

SAMUEL M. WORCESTER,

Recording Secretary.

S E R M O N .

GALATIANS ii. 20.

WHO LOVED ME, AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME.

THE greater part of the permanent good accomplished in this world is the consequence of love and gratitude to Jesus Christ. It was this which made a certain man the first of the Apostles, the first of the Christians, the first benefactor to his race ; and now, while the kingdoms in which he labored have perished, the consequences of his life, swayed by this motive, are flowing abroad over the earth, and were never in such full tide as at the present hour.

The subject of this discourse is, **THE POWER OF CHRISTIAN GRATITUDE.**

The truths of religion are so various, it makes such universal appeal to the powers and faculties of our nature, that we cannot assign to any one thing an exclusive control over our feelings and conduct ; but, as the many lamps of a light-house make one beaming star, and one element rules in them and by them, which is light, so love pervades and blends all the motives and affections of a true Christian, and makes the chief impression upon others. Accordingly, we find that grateful love to his Redeemer is the principal thing which gives direction and effect to the feelings and conduct of the great Apostle to the Gentiles.

This may appear to some too simple, not sufficiently intellectual, and wanting in true greatness, or at least dignity, to make it the spring of actions which have the present and eternal welfare of all

men for their aim and end. But it is, nevertheless, dignified and great ; it is intellectual, and it is in the best sense simple. The man before whom rhetoricians, metaphysicians, theologians of every school, men in all departments of learning bow, was not ashamed to say that his mind was ruled, in its highest exercises, by love and gratitude to a dying friend. Such a motive for the governing power of the life, none of the princes of this world in the realms of learning knew. Many of them had each a system of his own invention ; and among its transcendental mysteries he moved alone, as the moon walks through misty summits in the sky,

"Like the wild chamois on her Alpine snow,
Where hunter never climbed ;"

for their followers did not fully comprehend them. In an age when to be intellectual and passionless was the chief end*—when the power of abstraction was true greatness, and modern brahminical austerities were practiced upon the heart to make it insensible to everything but pure reason—for the chief Apostle of a new system to avow that the influence under which he professed to found a school which would convert every form of philosophy and religion, and bring the thrones of the world into subjection, was love and gratitude to a dying friend, was a step toward sublimity never equaled. We probably know but little of the derision implied in these few words—"and to the Greeks foolishness"—by which this great man, casually and without sensibility, expressed the treatment which his life and doctrine met with from the men of his day. It required large moral courage to be deemed by them a fool, and to admit that, in the sense in which they ignorantly applied the term, it was true. "We are fools," he said, "for Christ's sake." "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise." He passed through those three natural forms of opposition which every good reformer and his cause have endured from before the days of Sanballat, namely, Contempt, Persecution, and, the most to be feared, Compromise. He calmly tells us, "None

* "Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans and of the Stoicks encountered him.—*Acts xvii. 18.*

of these things move me." "Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again." This is grateful love to Jesus Christ, and such its power in him who, in obtaining mercy, became a pattern to all who should hereafter believe to life everlasting.

That love, the most powerful passion of the human mind, should be the great moving power in the Christian religion, and in that religion alone, is one of the proofs that this religion is from God. The greatest simplicity is thus imparted to mental philosophy as concerned with the mind in its approaches to God; unspeakable relief is afforded to the uninstructed majority of the race in coming to God, who are thus saved from the necessity of philosophical and casuistical distinctions, by the perfect intelligible-ness and naturalness of this motive, and its identity with the highest and most pleasurable emotions of which the mind is capable. Error is complicated, leads to interminable distinctions, abounds in wearisome exceptions. Truth is simple; the laws of nature are simple; the mechanical powers are simple; inspired language is simple, as no other language dares to be, or could be, if it would. True love is simple, and true religion is love, and God is love.

In setting forth the Power of Christian Gratitude, two principal things will be considered as the secret of that power.

I. The love of God, which awakens this gratitude, comes to us in connection with forgiveness.

Nothing makes such an impression upon the human heart as love made known to it at the moment of being forgiven. To be met with love when we are subdued with a sense of ill-desert, and submitting to merited punishment; to be loved with a love which seems infinite, not good-will merely, but delight in us, gives us powerful impressions of generosity and magnanimity. For it flows beyond the humble expectations which we had formed of bare endurance with us, of simple pardon, and swells to the

measure of that love which God feels toward one who has never displeased him ; yea, and beyond this, for it has a joy in it toward us more than over those who need no forgiveness. Such is not our experience in being forgiven by a fellow-man. Release from the consequences of doing wrong, the restoration of a good understanding, and of the former civil or friendly intercourse, are all which we expect. But we are taken by surprise, on being forgiven of God, at the discovery of a love toward us for which we can see no sufficient reason, making no account of our ill-desert ; nor, which is more surprising, perhaps, having any regard to our own conscious inferiority, but is derived, as we perceive, wholly from the sovereign pleasure of God, who is rich in mercy. So that we find ourselves at once strangely identified with Christ, being not only forgiven but beloved for his sake. Our emotions become too great for utterance, our ideas partake of that beautiful confusion which always finds expression in paradoxes ; and we begin to speak of knowing a love which passeth knowledge, and being filled with all the fullness of God.

Though this is not the manner of man when he forgives another, yet we see it and its effect illustrated by a good and judicious parent, and a forgiven child, who, being truly penitent and submissive, is sometimes treated with confidence, perhaps with honor, or whatever else may have been the very thing which he had seemed to forfeit. Such treatment bestowed upon a prisoner, or an enemy, has been known to bind him to the confiding or forgiving party, with a devotion which becomes enthusiasm. It lifts us up from the condition of one merely set free from punishment to that of a dear child ; the relation established is not that of an obliged debtor, but of one who has become tenfold more a son in consequence of all which has taken place. That best robe, the ring, the fatted calf, those superfluities of love and joy, made that prodigal, we may venture to say, a more devoted son and eminent child of God, than bare forgiveness could have done, a hundred times repeated. Not merely for the reason that a kindness done to a man under the influence of a great sorrow, or a happy change in his condition, makes the deepest impression upon him, but, coming at the moment of forgiveness, the love of God is in such contrast to our fears, it is so noble, godlike, no

wonder that the mind is sometimes overpowered with joy, pleasure becomes amazement, a flood lifts the soul to heaven, and when it subsides, it has made channels as deep as before it rose high. Here we see, in part, the secret of the Apostle's devotion to Christ, the spring of his feelings and conduct as a Christian missionary : "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." "For whom I have suffered the loss of all things." "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die for the name of the Lord Jesus." "The life that I live in the flesh I live by the faith, of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

There is one thing more which gives the love and gratitude excited in the human breast by Christ its supreme power over the heart and life.

II. Every instance of love to Christ is a case of reconciled affection.

We are so constituted that alienated love when fully restored, or affection succeeding prejudice and hostility, becomes an all-consuming passion. The mixture of sorrow in it gives it the power of the minor key in music ; a sense of having been unjust is like the push of the ocean behind every wave of feeling toward the beloved object. His excellency is heightened and brightened by the previous misapprehension ; there is a constant desire to make redress, to go beyond the ordinary measure of appreciation and love.

Every Christian is a converted enemy of God, a foe disarmed and gained over by kindness. "And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled." The wisdom of Him who knew what was in man is seen in building up a kingdom with subjects gained in this manner. It was intended to be an empire of love, and that love was intended to be and to do infinitely more than all the forces which control the human passions, or which are set in motion by them ; more than the love of conquest, or wealth, or beauty, or pleasure ; more than law perfectly obeyed, even in heaven, had ever achieved. Here is a sublime sight, an empire of

free minds swayed by the principle of love, and bound by a constancy of attachment which nothing else had ever effected ; an empire in which every subject is a subdued rebel and reconciled enemy, and for that reason a better impersonation of love, even, than the seraph who says, “ Lo these many years have I served thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment.” To whom his God replies with a fullness of love, in which, however, a certain quality is wanting which it receives by us : ‘ Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. But thy brother was dead and is alive again ; he was lost and is found.’

It was this feature in the kingdom of Christ, its being built on reconciled affections, which struck the mind of Napoleon Bonaparte in his meditations at St. Helena with great force, and led him to say things which no Christian divine, even, nor devout man has surpassed for strength and beauty of expression. By some marvellous power exerted upon the mind of that man, he was led to utter such words as the following,* which I cannot do better for my subject than to quote :

“ How should a Jew, the particulars of whose history are better attested than that of any of his contemporaries — how should he alone, the son of a carpenter, give out all at once that he was God, the Creator of all things ! He arrogates to himself the highest adoration. He constructs his worship with his own hands, not with stones but with men. You are amazed at the conquests of Alexander. But here is a conqueror who appropriates to his own advantage, who incorporates with himself, not a nation, but the human race. Wonderful ! the human soul with all its faculties becomes blended with the existence of Christ. And how ? by a prodigy surpassing all other prodigies he seeks the love of men, the most difficult thing in the world to obtain ; he seeks what a wise man would fain have from a few friends, a father from his children, a wife from her husband, a brother from a brother—in a word, the heart ; this he seeks, this he absolutely

* From the translation of a French tract printed in Paris, entitled “ NAPOLEON.” Its credibility is attested by Rev. Dr. G. De Felice, Professor in the Theological Seminary at Montauban, France, in a letter to the New York Observer, April 16, 1842. Count de Montholon is also known to have related similar expressions used by Napoleon, and these have likewise been published.

requires, and he gains his object. Hence I infer his divinity. Alexander, Cœsar, Hannibal, Louis XIV., with all their genius, failed here. They conquered the world, and had not a friend.

“ Christ speaks, and at once generations become his by stricter, closer ties than those of blood, by the most sacred, most indissoluble of all unions. He lights up the flame of a love which consumes self-love, which prevails over every other love.

“ The founders of other religions never conceived of this mystical love, which is the essence of Christianity, and is beautifully called charity. Hence it is that they have struck upon a rock. In every attempt to effect this thing, namely, *to make himself beloved*, man deeply feels his own impotence. So that Christ’s greatest miracle undoubtedly is the reign of charity. All who sincerely believe in him taste this wonderful, supernatural, exalted love. The more I think of this, I admire it the more. And it convinces me absolutely of the divinity of Christ.

“ I have inspired multitudes with such affection for me, that they would die for me. God forbid that I should compare the soldier’s enthusiasm with Christian charity, which are as unlike as their cause. But after all, my presence was necessary, the lightning of my eye, my voice, a word from me ; then the sacred fire was kindled in their hearts. I do, indeed, possess the secret of this magical power which lifts the soul, but I could never impart it to any one ; none of my generals ever learnt it from me ; nor have I the secret of perpetuating my name and love for me in the hearts of men, and to effect these things without physical means.

“ Now that I am at St. Helena, now that I am alone, chained to this rock, who fights and wins empires for me ? Where are any to share my misfortune, any to think of me ? Who bestirs himself for me in Europe ? Who remains faithful to me ; where are my friends ? Yes, two or three of you, who are immortalized by this fidelity, ye share, ye alleviate my exile. Such is the fate of great men. So it was with Cœsar and Alexander, and I too am forgotten ; and the name of a conqueror and an emperor is a college theme ; our exploits are tasks given to pupils by their tutor, who sits in judgment upon us, awarding us censure or praise. Such is soon to be the fate of the great Napoleon. What a wide abyss between my deep misery and the eternal kingdom of

Christ, which is proclaimed, loved, adored, and which is extending over all the earth ! Is this death ; is it not life rather ? The death of Christ is the death of a God."

Two of the principal sources of the power of Christian gratitude then, are, that the love of Christ, which excites this gratitude, comes in connection with forgiveness ; and that love to Christ is, in every instance, the fruit of reconciled affection.

I proceed to make application of what has now been said, to our great work.

I. THE OBJECT OF FOREIGN MISSIONS IS THE CONVERSION OF THE WORLD, BY LOVE, INTO AN EMPIRE OF LOVE.

We say to nations, We seek not yours, but you ; and you not for any advantage resulting to us, but because we love you ; and the reason why we love you is, that God has so loved us ; and beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. We therefore forsake our native land, and give away the whole of life, all that is precious in home and country, simply because we love you, and therefore seek to do you the greatest possible good, which is, to make you love God, and to be loved of him. Scattered among you, far and near, behold the graves of those who for your sakes have foregone the privilege of sleeping with kindred dust ! Beneath that tree, which is permanently bent as with sorrow by the prevailing wind, and almost within reach of your tides, lies buried a wife dying suddenly in one of her missionary voyages, and finding a grave at midnight by her husband's hands, who parts with her there, to go with a load of sorrow known only to God, and finish his work of love to you. Look over yon simple fence, and see the graves of men whose youth, manhood, and declining years, were spent that they might preach among you the unsearchable riches of Christ. They gained among you no inheritance of lands or flocks or houses or money ; they carried neither purse nor scrip for this purpose, but having food and raiment supplied by us, your friends, they were therewith content. We come to you as God the Savior came to us ; he was found of us who sought him not ; freely we have received, we freely give, the blessings of heaven to you. All this we do for Him who

loved us and gave himself for us. For we are not our own ; we are bought with a price. He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again.

Could we summon from its heavenly rest, this evening, one soul whom we have succeeded in winning to God, and behold upon its face the impress of beauty and peace which the experience of a few years in heaven have made upon it, and hear its little history of heathenism, and of rescue from it by us ; and then if its voice should break forth in the strains of some hymn well known beyond the stars as well as here, we should pursue our exercises this week thanking God and taking courage. But if all whom our love has saved should come hither from the skies, there would be scenes of love and joy here, which it is well for our contentment and fitness for our work that we know only by faith and not by sight. We multiply continually the number of holy and happy spirits in heaven. At first we heard of almost every instance in which a soul was redeemed from among the heathen ; but now these things, and certain great events in the progress of our work which once would have astounded us, pass on without much surprise. So in the day time, no doubt, the coruscations of the Aurora are in the heavens, great meteors fly there, and constellations wheel along the sky, but the light of day eclipses them. The sun of millenial glory is so near its rising, that such events as the national independence of the Sandwich Islands, the Bible given to one whole nation after another in its own tongue, toleration in Turkey maintained for us by the very sword of Mohammed, hardly awaken much surprise. Thus victories of peace proceed through the earth ; and, as this kingdom advances, every conquest is the conquest of one heart more which is forever to love God and man, the opening of a new fountain of bliss springing up unto everlasting life.

Let one incident bring to view the nature and effects, upon a larger scale, of this enterprise of love. Two African chiefs came suddenly upon each other at a spring in the wilderness. They had been deadly foes, and so had their tribes. They looked at each other, and each thought that some change had happened to his enemy, till at last one of them smiled, and the other offered a sign

of friendship ; and then they embraced, and told each the other what Christ had done for him. Such is the empire of love which we are seeking to extend, glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will toward men. Its incidental influences are stupendous ; but as the serviceable works of God are clothed with beauty which is no part of their main design and yet by many are mistaken for it, as the phosphorescence in the wake of a ship is not mentioned in the ship's inventory or plan of the voyage, so with affluent kindness the religion of Jesus sheds beauty and prosperity every where while seeking to promote our spiritual good, but which are no more its chief object, as worldly minds suppose, than those handkerchiefs and aprons which were borne to the sick from the body of Paul, were the chief purpose in his great commission. These incidental fruits of Christianity alone are worth vastly more than the cost of the whole enterprise, and like the sun and rain they are the means of wealth to evil and unthankful men, some of whom neglect, and others, alas ! revile that religion, with its institutions, which incidentally gives them their power to get wealth.

Is not war between this country and Great Britain more improbable by her union with us in our Turkish missions ? By this annexation of Great Britain to America, not only without resistance on the part of the mother country but at her request, we have done more than all the modern schemes of annexation will accomplish for the good of mankind, should they all succeed. Over those waters where the gallant men of both countries have won and lost in battle with each other, let the ships of the two countries, as they pass, soon unfold those words written forever on their flags : " HE IS OUR PEACE."

One thing deserves special mention, as a fruit of this empire of love, because it lies at the foundation of almost every thing in human welfare. The rights of the individual are recognized and respected in proportion as Christianity prevails. Indeed, it is only when Christ is known and obeyed, that men cease to be designated merely as so many muskets. The explanation is this : The Gospel makes every thing of the individual soul, illustrates its infinite, intrinsic worth, lays vast responsibilities upon it, denies the right of the church and priest to interpose between it and God, and makes each man feel and say of Christ, " Who loved me, and gave

himself for me." We claim that this is the origin of that all-important difference in the esteem which is accorded to man as an individual in different parts of the earth, viz.: the value which the Gospel teaches each man to set upon his own soul, and that of every other man. Out of this grows the public sentiment that men are not made for their rulers, but their rulers for them, and both for God, so that absolute monarchies and despotisms will be impossible, when men learn the infinite price paid as the ransom of the soul. "This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." "Even so, it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish." The end of all is to gather together a society of which every one shall be a reconciled enemy, in whose whole consciousness, forever, this shall be the prevailing feeling, that he has been loved with the love of God, that his Creator and Redeemer have made him their personal friend, having come in unto him and supped with him and he with them, making his endless being one hymn of praise to the God of redemption, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, thus ennobling him in his own esteem; for "since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee." When you think of a society in which the history of each individual will contain sufficient, if fully disclosed, to secure the highest love to God from every intelligent being, that salvation from hell and the possession of heaven on the part of each were enough to warrant all that Christ could suffer; when you consider that the multitudes are without number of whom this will be true, and that the disinterested love which redeemed them has lighted up a flame of the same love in each of them toward every fellow creature, and that in the same sense in which God is love, all his attributes conspiring to express love, heaven is to be forever a world of love, being the mirror of God, and that the accumulating joy and bliss of heaven are expressed to our imagination, faintly indeed, but as far as we could understand it, by telling us that if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life, and then consider that the simple object of our institution and of our assembly is to people this heaven, brethren

and sisters in Christ, fellow-heirs in this service and its reward, the work in which we are engaged is unequalled in interest and sublimity, we may venture to say, in the universe of God! If there are angels by whose hands the walls of heaven were built and its foundation garnished with all manner of precious stones, its golden pavement laid, its gates of pearl were hung, I would rather be the means of bringing one soul to enjoy that heaven than to see my name in burning sapphires as its architect. But, "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever." For if any thing can add a joy to all this, it is the thought that each of us may contribute to such bliss. The greatest honors and privileges of an earthly kind are within reach of the few ; but, blessed be God, his empire of love is such that every one may make his character and influence felt without limits, in proportion as they are pure and good. No peculiarities in my circumstances prevent me from loving my fellow men as Christ loved me. The honor which comes from man I may fail to obtain ; I may be disappointed, desolation may waste my earthly happiness, but no one can hinder me from consecrating my whole heart to Christ, my talents, my property, my children, my efforts, to the work of persuading each fellow-creature that Christ loved him and gave himself for him. I can go from house to house with this love of Christ, and kindle it from heart to heart. I can make every depraved creature feel that I love him, because Christ has loved me ; I can leave all that I love and go to regions beyond the present boundary of Christian missions and win men to Christ and heaven—so free are the honors of this empire, so omnipotent is that love which is the ruling principle in the heart of its King and of every subject. The object of Foreign Missions, let it be repeated, is, the conversion of the world by love, into an empire of love.

II. THE LOVE OF CHRIST IS OUR RULE, AND ITS RESULTS TO HIM SHOULD BE OUR ENCOURAGEMENT, IN THE MISSIONARY WORK.

The love of Christ is our rule. We love to indulge, as the Bible does, in military figures, in speaking of the kingdom of Christ, and of the way in which it is to be built up ; but we must guard against the sternness and harshness with which they may

insensibly affect our feelings. We must remember, as the Bible teaches us, that all the conquests of Christ are conquests of men's hearts, and that every enemy of God will be subdued, if at all, by convincing his understanding, and winning him to Christ. The Book of Daniel, filled with prophecies of Messiah's reign, written in captivity, and therefore enhancing to the vision of the prophet the times of Christ, as the cloud that covered Tabor gave the raiment of Christ a more exceeding whiteness—that wonderful book of prophecy concludes with a chapter which contains a benediction upon those who "turn many to righteousness;" thus holding up to view the manner in which that kingdom, whose testimony is the spirit of prophecy, would be promoted, and the reward of those who should labor to establish it.

Legislation cannot be substituted for love, as the primary means of influencing men for their moral and spiritual good. Legislation, just and wise, is nevertheless one of the chief munitions of public and private virtue, nor can we properly refuse its aid in morals and religion. But legislation, as a means of converting the hearts of men to God, we all know, has been declared by divine authority pointing to a divine precedent to be ineffectual. There never was a better law than the moral law, nor was legislation ever attended with circumstances better fitted to secure the perfect love and obedience of men. But in that beautifully simple way in which the Bible relates the thoughts of God as of a man, this is spoken of as an experiment that failed, leading the lawgiver to devise another expedient. In that familiar passage, For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, we have a striking confession of weakness even in the law of God, on account of strength superior to it in the stubbornness of the human heart. But the law of God still holds its place, only there is a Gospel added to make the law efficacious; for the expedient resorted to for the purpose of reaching the transgressor by the atonement, aims to re-establish the law of God as the rule of duty. God has taught us that he himself, with his holy, just and good law, cannot persuade men; and shall we be wiser than God? We must have a Gospel in our hearts and upon our lips, when we have tables of stone in our hands; else the temptation which beset the Jewish lawgiver, descending from Sinai, will be ours.

There was truth in the law by Moses, and no grace ; but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Let no man decry wise legislation, expecting of it more than it can in the nature of things accomplish, and then refusing its aid. On the other hand, they who rely wholly on the enunciation of right and the denunciation of wrong to make men just and good, do not copy after the divine pattern. We hardly need go beyond the ordinary knowledge which we have of human nature, to illustrate this remark.* To prevent the mortification and shame which are the natural result of an awakened conscience from destroying us, God, who is rich in mercy, and who knows perfectly how to influence free agents, comes to us in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. He overcomes that self-abhorrence, which we project from ourselves, and transfer to his feelings towards us, by showing us the divine sufferer at Pilate's bar and upon the cross, numbered with the transgressors, bearing the sins of many, and making intercession for the transgressors. No words of mere upbraiding are heard—no epithets of contempt stinging us in proportion as they are deserved—distinguished sinners are not hung in effigy—there are no life-like pictures of our folly and shame confounding us, and driving us to despair ; but mercy and hope stand nigh, “ lest the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.” If with grief he tells us,

* It is forcibly shown even by one of the common precepts of rhetoric, derived from the laws of the human mind. A master in that art, Abp. Whately, tells us, “It is possible and dangerous to write too forcibly. Some,” he says, “conscious of having been the slaves or the supporters of such prejudices as are thus held up to contempt, not indeed by disdainful language, but simply by being placed in a very clear light, and of having overlooked truths which, when thus clearly explained and proved, appear perfectly evident even to a child, will consequently be stung by a feeling of shame, passing off into resentment, which stops their ears against argument. They could have borne, perhaps, to change their opinion, but not so to change it as to tax that opinion with the greatest folly. Thus the very triumphant force of the reasoning adduced, seems to harden them against admitting the conclusion ; much as one may conceive Roman soldiers desperately holding out an untenable fortress to the last extremity, from apprehension of being made to pass under the yoke by the victor, should they surrender.”

“Thou hast brought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices, but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities ;” he does not delay to add, “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my name’s sake, and will not remember thy sins.” He who knows by experience how God has dealt with his will, ought to know how to influence every other human will ; and so far as we mistake here, we bring our own Christian experience, or temper, into suspicion.

Apply what has been said to one great labor which presents itself in our work, the removal of that most formidable object in the way of Christianity, Oriental Caste. The pride of the human heart is concentrated there ; the customs of ages are a wall round about it ; the fiercest and most virulent human passions stand guard over it. Catechisms, creeds, treatises, church censures, may do their part in enlightening the understanding ; but there is only one thing which will be to it what converting grace is among the means of grace. We possess the secret of success. “And he took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, and said, Drink ye all of it ; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” The spirit which dictated these words shed abroad in the hearts of Christian missionaries and pervading their influence, the necessity of drinking the same cup, or rather the willingness to do so, under the experience of forgiven sin and gratitude and love to Christ, will at last make a large part of the inhabitants of the earth, who are now aliens to each other, one in Christ Jesus. Divine wisdom, which made eating and drinking the method of commemorating the Savior’s death, has prepared the way of reconciliation, and divine love will lead into it those whom no persuasion or force could bring together. He who rose from the table and washed the disciples’ feet, will, by the spirit which he has given us, bring the whole human family to his table, as he also will to one fold and one Shepherd.

In connection with this subject, it is easy to understand why truly good missionaries possess such a heavenly spirit, why they are every man’s friends, why they have such simple piety, and why their eloquence, on such occasions as these, moves our assem-

blies as they are seldom moved by words from other men. To be truly good missionaries, they must of necessity have the same mind which was in Christ, loving their fellow-men for Christ's sake ; for nothing else but fanaticism or powerful worldly motives can sustain men in such a work. A truly good missionary is therefore seldom a one-sided man ; he is not possessed by one inferior idea ; while he has his infirmities, and his antipathies, and his favorite schemes, he cannot be a radical, a man of extreme views, an advocate of measures to be immediately and at all hazards enforced, for his work among the heathen would soon cure his radicalism or drive him home ; but apart from this, true Christian charity exerts a conservative influence upon the character, and a corresponding effect upon the temper and manners. How foreign from our impressions of that great reformer, the Apostle Paul, is wholesale denunciation, and the vituperative style of writing, insolent manners and speech ! "For though we walk after the flesh," he tells us, "we do not war after the flesh." If there be men, (would you pardon me if I do not add, women?) whose spirit and manners are models, they are to be found among Christian missionaries. Human character has seldom risen higher in this world than we have seen and loved it in them. Some of the missionary Bishops of the Church of England have been among the most humble and Christ-like men of all who ever wore the mitre. We have wondered, perhaps, at the beautiful simplicity of piety in the converts from among the heathen, and some have thought that its flavor was derived from the soil. Not so ; but from the simple-hearted missionaries, determin'd not to know any thing among them but Jesus Christ and him crucified. To them the controversies which vex their brethren at home are comparatively nothing ; but daily in the temple, and from house to house, they teach and preach Jesus Christ. Who is to be our next President—which crisis in our national affairs for the past half century was certainly to be the last—the preparation for the blending of parties—the trouble and sorrow which reformers, with their more enlightened perceptions, have with their more insensible brethren, and the necessity which these brethren have of replying as Job did to his friends, "What ye know, the same do I know also ; I am not inferior unto you" ;—the controversy in the newspapers

which absorbs all hearts and tongues, but, like March, "comes in like a lion, and goes out like a lamb";—all, in short, for which we are disquieted in vain, instead of worrying and perplexing them, has either the effect of the distant surf which deepens repose, or it awakens thoughts of mingled sadness and gratefulness, like the booming of cannon on a battle-field far off. As they look upon their humble converts, with their simple-hearted faith, they dread the approach of the time when the corruptions of Christianity shall reach even them, when the errors and divisions of Christendom shall be transplanted there, and when the love of many waxing cold, which here leads to contention, shall suffer the same chill in those new households of faith.

In helping Christian missionaries to build up this empire of love, perhaps we have not sufficiently considered our duty to cultivate and encourage in ourselves, as a Christian community, only those things which it will be safe to transplant. We are responsible to the heathen world not only for missionaries, but for a healthful Christianity yet to be translated. We are the mother country to those young Christian states, who will emulate our virtues and copy our vices. As the surest way of becoming an example to the churches and communities which we are assisting to form in heathen and pagan nations, we must be imbued with the spirit and be actuated by the motive set forth in our text and subject, and exemplified by the great Apostle and all the true successors to this day. This will be in proportion as "we have known and believed the love which God hath to us." He who conducts a public disputation in the spirit of Christ, he who makes his newspaper breathe that spirit, the preachers who abstain from unfruitful subjects and hold forth Christ crucified, the Christians who by deeds of love fill the house with the odor of their ointment, as, for example, by adopting and cherishing the child of a dear missionary brother and sister who have known that great anguish of parting with their children for the sake of their work, do more to convert the heathen, and confirm the converts among them, than all the orators and scientific men of Christendom. It is most instructive, it is a rebuke to us, to notice what deeds Christ emblazons, what kind of people he rewards with a place in the New Testament—the widow with her two mites, the weep-

ing woman anointing him for his burial. Wherever the Gospel is preached, that which these have done is by his appointment to be told as a memorial of them. A grateful, loving heart, with Christ for its object, comprises everything which is essential to success in this work. Giving ceases to be regarded as a duty, and becomes a joy. As certain flowers are quick to hear and greet the voices of spring, so there are hearts in many churches which are sensitive to every appeal in behalf of a good object, and we find that these are hearts in which Christ dwells by faith. And, on the contrary, as the mimosa on the prairie shuts itself up whenever a horse's hoof strikes the ground at a distance from it, so there are hearts which recoil and close themselves at such appeals ; and how dwelleth the love of God in them ! He only who can say from the heart, Our Father which art in heaven, instinctively adds, Hallowed be thy name. The more we love him and are grateful to him, the more will our thoughts and feelings be absorbed in direct efforts to make him known and loved, and these impassioned words of an ardent woman, which Cowper has translated, will then express our feelings :

“ O, reign, wherever man is found,
Jesus, beloved and divine ;
Then am I rich, and then alone,
When every human heart is thine.

“ A thousand sorrows pierce my soul
To think that all are not thy own ;
O, be adored from pole to pole !
Where is thy zeal ? Arise ! be known ! ”

Having considered our rule of duty, we proposed also to consider the encouragement in the results to Christ of his love to men. By the results to Christ of his love, I mean particularly the feelings toward him of all who are redeemed and saved by his love. Contemplate Christ for a few moments, therefore, in his daily life, and the whole manner of that life.

He had the best opportunity to enjoy every thing which the world could give. It was no illusion which passed before his mind on the exceeding high mountain, though the tempter there overrated his own power. What wealth he might have acquired ; what realms he might have annexed to his temporal throne ; what

luxuries could the earth, air and seas have brought to his table ; what a home of love and joy could he have filled with all manner of delights ; what a benefactor to the human intellect in the cause of learning might he have become, by being himself absorbed in philosophy and the arts ! O thou man of sorrows ! How different from this was the manner of thy life ! He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant. Every morning, as he regained his consciousness, there came over him, no doubt, that shadow which falls so drearily upon the waking thoughts of one in trouble, before he recollects what the burden is which is waiting for him. No retirement and rest soothed and refreshed him, except as he found it in wildernesses and mountains. We read that on one occasion he went down into Capernaum, he and his mother and his disciples ; but there is significance in the seemingly unimportant remark of the historian, who adds, "He continued there not many days." Love, gushing from hearts bound to him by the tenderest ties, did not tempt him to linger at their cool, moss-grown sides ; but we find, in one saying of his, the key to his whole life : "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." To court the favor of others, to live on their sympathy in his troubles, or on their smiles, to be glad or sad according as he was caressed or slighted, was the opposite of his manner of life. When the proprietor of an orchard visits it, he knows what trees to shake ; he gathers the best of the fruits. Here was one, the world was made by him, who refused every tree, plucked no clusters, forgetting himself, and living only for the good of others. That he was not insensible to pleasure, we need not say ; indeed, we are expressly told that it was for the very highest pleasure, for the joy set before him, that he endured the cross, despising the shame.

Nor will we allow that Christ, though a man of sorrows, was an unhappy man. Does James break in upon us with a smiling face, and, hardly waiting to finish his salutatory words, exclaim, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations ?" The dreamer in Bedford Jail was not an unhappy man. Does not every greatly afflicted child of God, who is resigned and

patient, say that the religious experience which comes by his Heavenly Father's discipline is worth all that he suffers? Is he not like one who gathers precious stones upon a stormy shore, and like a branch laden heavily with fruit, when the vine-dresser's knife has purged it? "Behold, he cometh with clouds," is true of Christ in many of his approaches to us for our highest spiritual happiness. What thoughts and feelings Jesus must have had amidst his sorrows, what clear insight into things, what companionship of beautiful truths in his solitude and darkness, like a mountain-top "visited all night with troops of stars!" He who meditated the Sermon on the Mount, those parables, and more than all, those works of love which filled one day after another—was it possible for him to be unhappy? "I am not alone, for the Father is with me." And if that to his sincere follower is not only consolation but joy, what must it have been to the Beloved? Nevertheless, he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. For us he was smitten, stricken of God, and afflicted.

Now look at the results to him, and the great reward. He is the object of the most intense love which ever fills the human breast. Those who love him have suffered every thing for him, and for refusing to deny him. The slow preparations at the stake, the wife and children looking on, the amphitheatre and the lions, the sack filled with serpents, the body smeared with honey for the wasps, stoning, and sawing asunder, and casting down headlong, tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril and sword, only made them rejoice that they were counted worthy to suffer for his name. Having obtained redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, the sacred writer, following the intense language of the Savior with respect to eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of Man, tells us, "They washed their robes, and made them white in his blood," expressing the perfect fellowship and identification which they had with him in his sufferings. What noise of a multitude is this! I see a procession, ten thousand deep, moving with harps and songs toward a Man upon a throne. They will not cast so many crowns at his feet! It is done. O, can he be worthy of all this? "Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

“Can this be he who used to stray
 A pilgrim on the world’s highway,
 Oppressed by power and mocked by pride,
 The Nazarene, the Crucified?”

I understand it now. This was “the joy set before him ;” for this he “came not to be ministered unto but to minister ;” for this he “took upon him the form of a servant ;” and this is “the oil of gladness above thy fellows ;” and “he that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.” There never is to be, there never can be, an object of greater love in the universe than Jesus Christ ; and this love is to grow deeper, and to rise higher, with the increasing knowledge of what it is to be redeemed and saved. This living not to one’s self and the consequences of it have their perfect example in him, and he has taught us the secret of it in these words, which he verified by his own experience : “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone ; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life, shall lose it ; but he that hateth his life for my sake, and the gospel’s, the same shall save it.”

Three things press strongly for utterance in view of what has now been said.

First. *Every Christian possesses that which Christian Missions seek to bestow upon the heathen and pagan world.*

It has great power to awaken Christian gratitude when you reflect, If I am a Christian, all that Christ did, all that Christians do, for the world, I have experienced. You are partaker of that change of heart which lies at the foundation of every spiritual blessing, and which it is the first object of Christian missions to effect in the hearts of men. Whatever this Gospel through the power of the Holy Ghost may confer upon the whole earth, it cannot do more in its beginning for any soul than it has done for you. The whole secret of religion, the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, are wholly yours, no less than they are or can be those of any human being. Redemption is not a dividend to which the whole human race is a divisor and the quotient your little share ; but God is yours ; Christ loved you, and gave himself for you ; the Holy Spirit, after that you believed, sealed you ; and severally

they say to you, “Fear not, I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine.” Two things contend in your bosom for the supremacy as you think of this, Gratitude on your own account, and Hope for the world. Having freely received that which it is the sole object of this great enterprise to impart, and knowing that there are millions capable of all of which you are capable, you do not need, you will not expect one word of exhortation; (the power of Christian gratitude in your hearts makes it unnecessary to add one word of exhortation.) If the Savior himself were visibly present, would he need to exhort you? But stretching his hand over you would he not simply say, “Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.” Hope for the world may well be confident and joyful in those in whom God has done all which he has done in you. Did Jesus seek you ‘when a stranger, wandering from the fold of God?’ Was that heart broken, and that will subdued? Did all those secret, crimson sins become as wool, as snow? What hinders the universal triumph of divine grace? Take up the Apostle’s doxology: “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.”

Secondly. *It will be a great loss not to have shared in the work of Christian Missions.*

There is to be an hour when the mediatorship will be finished, and the sufferings of Christ will cease to redeem a soul. Jesus will have reigned—all enemies will have been put under his feet—every one of his purposes will have been crowned with a triumph. Then the question will be, Who were co-workers with him? All our actions here, even our benevolent acts, will be tried by this—Ye did it, or ye did it not, unto me. Life, then, will appear useful or useless, according as we promoted the ascendancy of Christ over the hearts of men, and in proportion as the power of Christian gratitude constrained us.) Then will come the day of praise to Christian martyrs, faithful missionaries, parents who parted with endeared children for Christ’s sake, private contributors whose love made their humble gifts exceeding great; and on every hand sights of resplendent beauty and signs of special joy among the

redeemed will excite the question, Who are these, and whence came they ?

But of some on whom the Christian religion and its institutions have indirectly conferred wealth and honor, Christ will be compelled to say that they did not, from love to him, or from real interest in his cause, give him so much as the value of the nails which held him to the cross for them and for the world. The widow's mite could have paid for those nails, without which how could the Scripture be fulfilled that thus it must be ? So that we cannot say that any thing which we give to Christ, or withhold from him, is a trifle. But think, you that are rich, or learned, or greatly honored, how inconsiderable you will become, if your name is not identified with the cause and kingdom of Jesus Christ. No promise ever had a more conspicuous fulfillment than this : " I will set him on high, because he hath known my name." Whoever identifies himself with Jesus Christ, the Savior himself says, (but the strongest faith pauses at the word,) " He shall sit with me on my throne." Few, comparatively, know who wrote the *Oratorios* of Israel in Egypt, Samson, Saul, and Judas Maccabeus. Handel would not have made himself universally beloved, and his name every where fragrant, by those compositions ; but he wrote the *Messiah* ; and now, while there are hearts that cry, I know that my Redeemer liveth, and worship him whose name is Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, the name of Handel will twine itself like an evergreen around those adorable names ; and of all who heard the sweetest singer of our age, a great part will remember her as much as for any thing, for this, that she sung, " I know that my Redeemer liveth." Whoever identifies himself in any way with Christ, makes himself immortal. You may be among the first of your kind in every thing else ; but if even the nation and the kingdom which will not serve Christ shall perish, what will become of you ? A great funeral may solemnize your departure from among men ; but there is a second death, and your name and expectation will perish. No great assembly in the other world will record their sense of irreparable calamity at your loss ; no Pleyel's Hymn from angels and saints will follow you as you lie down in sorrow, nor requiems speak of your return while they mourn your departure. " As

from the shaft the sky no scar retains," so your unbelief and ingratitude will leave heaven perfect in beauty and happiness, its numbers full, its separating gulf impassable. We, the members of this Society for Propagating the Gospel, we, the missionaries of the cross, we, the converts of heathen and pagan lands, join, and as though God did beseach you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God. Appeals will be made to you in his name, this year, for your aid in spreading the Gospel through the earth. Take a gift, be it much or little, but according to your ability ; go in secret and offer it to Christ ; make it a bond of love and gratitude between yourself and him, and so begin to identify your interests with his ; in which case your influence will have no end, and no spirit in heaven may be happier through all eternity than you. Now is the time to be serviceable to Christ and his cause. The cry for the Gospel comes to us with every arrival from the East ; the God of battles is our King and Head ; armies are preparing the way before his Gospel ; kings shall serve him, all nations shall call him blessed. As his kingdom grows, every thing which promotes human welfare advances ; the earth shall yield her increase ; wealth, learning, arts, are bringing their honors to Christ. Come, for the world is coming to Christ.

" See how from far, upon the eastern road,
 The star-lit wizards haste, with odors sweet.
 O run, prevent them with thy humble ode,
 And lay it lowly at his blessed feet.
 Have thou the honor first thy Lord to greet,
 And join thy voice unto the angel choir,
 From out his altar touched, with hallowed fire."

Finally. *The sure success of this empire of love should influence the plans and efforts of the Friends of Missions.*

We should give large room to faith, and not be governed by the distrustful, wary spirit of trade, but rely more on the Christian feelings of our contributors, studying the best ways of appealing to those feelings, assured that in the promises of God, and in the Christian gratitude of every child of God, we have a warrant for every plan and expenditure which sound judgment shall approve. For the success of this work is the success of the eternal counsels of God. There are no chapters in the Old Testament better suited

to awaken astonishment than those in Joshua, where the Most High directs the leader of Israel to partition the yet unconquered land of Canaan among the tribes, and the tribes proceed to cast lots for their shares. But do they not know that they are entering upon the most fearful of wars, a war of extermination, in which men are to fight for their homes and the graves of their fathers, and will die upon those graves rather than yield one inch of their soil? Walled cities, an enemy familiar with the ambuscades and fastnesses of the country, nine hundred chariots of iron belonging to one king, giants not only for leaders but as common soldiers, all are nothing to this Israelitish troop, emerging from a desert. The shout of a king is among them. There is no such thing as chances of war; the land is marked out, the lot is drawn, the country is theirs before the battles are fought. So, thou Church of God, all things are yours, whether the world, or whatever is essential to its conquest for Christ! But as the decrees of heaven and the divine partition of Canaan did not supersede battles, but nerved the hearts and arms of the warring tribes, we should draw encouragement from the prophecies and promises respecting the universal reign of Christ, and strive according to his working which worketh in us mightily. Despondency shall never whisper its chilling words in our ears; for all the events of the world, and all the vicissitudes which we meet with in our work, will only promote the grand design. Looking at a distant rock-bound promontory one morning at sunrise after a stormy night, I saw that every breaker with its surf was clothed in the colors of the rainbow. It was the natural operation of the laws of light, which every one sees under the same conditions. But having made the discovery, it was a joy which was new every morning, when the sun appeared after a storm, to feast the eyes with that vision, the sea troubled, but not a wave proceeding from it which did not clothe itself in beautiful resemblance to the bow in the cloud. It was as though the sea itself, "the melancholy main," were one depository of hidden beauty, proclaimed by every wave that lashed the shore. So, I thought, is it with the whole history of the dealings of God with his Church, and with every member of it. Could we but take that glass of faith which is the evidence of things not seen, we should behold every affliction and trouble, all those "footsteps"

of God which "are not known," covered, like these footsteps of the sea upon the shore, with the emblem of hope. "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart;" and every billow seen by the rising sun has more of beauty and glory in proportion to its depth and length and height. Courage, then, fellow-laborers, everywhere! Receive the hand of fellowship, brethren of every name, companions in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ! Let the storm-bred mire of sectarian and sectional feeling henceforth and forever disappear; and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and we, like the ocean, its waves many, its waters one, roll to every shore the story of redeeming love. We are building an empire of love; our motive is gratitude and love; the fruit of our labor is love; our spirit and temper shall be love; Jerusalem, our happy home, is a home of love; and there the only song in which every nation and kindred and tongue and people can unite will be, Redemeing Love.

ANNUAL SERMON

BEFORE THE

American Board of Commissioners for
Foreign Missions,

AT THEIR

FORTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING,

BY GEORGE W. BETHUNE, D. D.

OCTOBER, 1856.

PAUL, THE MISSIONARY.

(16)

A

S E R M O N ,

Preached at Newark, New Jersey, October 28, 1856,

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR

FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AT THEIR

FORTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING.

BY GEORGE W. BETHUNE, D. D.

Minister of the Reformed Dutch Church on the Heights, Brooklyn, N. Y.

BOSTON:

PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN, 42 CONGRESS STREET.

1856.

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

NEWARK, N. J., OCTOBER 31, 1856.

Resolved, That the thanks of the Board be presented to the Rev. Dr. BETHUNE, for his Sermon delivered on Tuesday evening; and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.

Attest,

SAMUEL M. WORCESTER, Rec. Secretary.

S E R M O N .

1 TIMOTHY 1. 15.

THIS IS A FAITHFUL SAYING, AND WORTHY OF ALL ACCEPTATION, THAT CHRIST JESUS CAME INTO THE WORLD TO SAVE SINNERS, OF WHOM I AM CHIEF.

SINCE the day on which our enthroned Lord sent down the Holy Ghost, there has not occurred an event so important as the conversion of the man who uttered these words. Nowhere throughout the Sacred Annals is the power of divine grace over the sinful heart so fully shown, as in his sudden change from a self-righteous, fanatical persecutor of Jesus and Christians, to a humble, self-sacrificing servant of Christ and his Church ; nor is it easy to see how an honest inquirer can resist a fact so confirmatory of the gospel as the open advocacy of its faith by the most logical, accomplished, and determined spirit that ever battled on the side of its enemies. No wonder that the display of glory which sent Saul of Tarsus crushed and groping into the city he would have filled with slaughter, is so frequent a theme of those who vindicate Christianity from assault, or celebrate the sovereign mercy of redeeming love. Yet the direct purpose of the miracle must not be misunderstood.

“The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.” Miracles were necessary to establish the new system in place of the Mosaic, which had been established by miracle; and there were reasons why the transformation of such a notable enemy into such a notable champion of the Cross should have a correspondent notoriety; but outward prodigy never yet subdued a carnal mind to the rule of Christ. We dishonor the evangelical method, which is no respecter of persons, and cast a heavy stumbling-block before the lowly-minded, if we suppose that other and greater means are required to convert the learned and intellectual than suffice for ordinary sinners. Far as our Apostle towers above the rest of the Church, the difference is as nothing to the immeasurable height from which comes down the saving health of God’s Anointed. The “Hebrew of the Hebrews,” and “Pharisee of the Pharisees,” “brought up at the feet of Gamaliel,” and versed in the philosophies of the Gentiles, “obtained mercy” through the same simple faith that saved, by the inward grace of the Holy Ghost, the jailer of Philippi, the thief on the cross, and the outcast of Nain. How else could he be “a pattern of long-suffering to all who should afterward believe on Christ to life everlasting?”

The especial design of “the heavenly vision,” as revealed by the Lord through Ananias, is declared by Paul himself in his speech before Agrippa: “I said, Who art thou, Lord? and he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness,

both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee ; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee ; to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me. Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision ; but showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.—Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the Prophets and Moses did say should come : That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people and to the Gentiles.”

The promise unto the father of the faithful was, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed ; yet the oracles of God were confined by rigid rules to the children of the circumcision. The angel at the nativity announced good tidings of great joy, which should be to all people ; yet our Lord preached, with a very few inconsiderable exceptions, only to his own nation. Immediately before his ascension, he commanded his Apostles to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature ; yet, up to the time of which we speak, their ministry had been confined to Jews

and proselytes. Indeed, the Christian Church was not yet fully formed, for the Gentile element of Christ's body, the "one new man," had not been added to the Jewish. So, you will observe, the inspired historian records the calling of Cornelius on the page of his parchment next to the narrative of Paul's signal appointment; and the joyful surprise of the Apostles and the brethren that were in Judea at the news, shows how feebly they had apprehended the extent of the divine purpose in salvation.

We are, therefore, brought to believe that the effulgent scene near the gate of Damascus, was not intended merely for the conversion of a single sinner, but for a crowning development of the evangelical economy by the inauguration of the missionary system; and that in Paul, especially chosen, particularly ordained, pre-eminently qualified by natural and supernatural gifts for the work he pursued with unparalleled success, we have the type and example of a true missionary spirit.

To this last point, *The illustration of the missionary spirit by the Apostle Paul*, your thoughts will be mainly directed at this time.

In so attempting a discharge of the duty laid upon me to-night, I am encouraged by the consideration that, though the earthen vessel be unworthy, the treasure it presents to you is taken immediately from the riches of God; that I follow the express command of our great Apostle, when he says: "Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do;" and

that I speak to Protestant, evangelical Christians, who, amidst all the pretensions of modern “philosophy, falsely so called,” take their theology, not from the speculations of the nineteenth century, but from the inspired teachings of the first; and who, holding the unadulterated, uncurtailed Bible as the sole, absolute, infallible, and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice, believe that “though an angel from heaven preach any other gospel” than that Paul preached, he should be accursed. Nor need we review the whole history of the Apostle, and search through all his writings, to reach the discovery we desire. He has himself anticipated our necessity, and, in his affectionate counsel to his dear son and missionary successor, given us a text unspeakably precious to every soul born of the Spirit, which every student of his Epistles recognizes as a close, yet clear condensation of them all—the very breath and life of his sanctified mind and heart; the theme of ten thousand sermons, but so full of gospel, that it continually overflows as with honey from the cleft of the rock; so profound, that a whole system of theology might be drawn from its few words, yet so simple, that even I may preach upon it by God’s help, and hope to win a hearing from those who love Jesus, and the truth as it is in him.

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.” The verse has two parts. The Apostle’s Faith, and his Confession.

His Faith: “This is a faithful saying, and

worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

His Confession: "of whom (sinners) I am chief."

First—THE APOSTLE'S FAITH:

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

He "came" by his own divine power and choice, from the sphere where he had dwelt eternally, "into the world;" yet not of his own prerogative alone, for he was the "Christ," the only-begotten Son of God, sent of the Father by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the form and true nature of man; called "JESUS," the Savior, before he was conceived of the Holy Ghost by the Virgin Mary, (blessed was she among women, and blessed the fruit of her womb!) Sent of God the Father, and anointed by God the Holy Ghost, God the Son, in our nature, assumed the headship of a new creation, the second Adam, our Elder-Brother Jesus, that he might "save sinners." Our race was lost; all were concluded under sin, and the sentence of death had passed upon all. Before any of the guilty could be brought back to life and God, the law which they had broken, the law given to man to be obeyed on earth, must be satisfied and vindicated; therefore, the Deliverer came into the world truly man as he was truly God; and, having thus taken upon him the form of a servant "in fashion as a man," he became obedient unto [i. e. until death,] even the death of the cross. Then, with the last breath of his holy, obedient, suffering, exemplary life, the satisfaction of the law, which he, sent of the Father,

and sanctified of the Holy Ghost, came into the world to provide, was “finished;” and the ground, the only possible ground in the judgment of God, on which a human sinner can be saved, was laid in his infinite merits.

Yet, while the merit on which the salvation should proceed was provided, the salvation of the sinner was not accomplished. He must be brought back to God a willing penitent, and, to be a sharer in the benefits of Christ, must become a new creature. Christ cannot be a minister of sin, or justice allow of pardon to an impenitent sinner. His people must be made like him, the second Adam, his image formed in their hearts as the earnest of glory with him. They must be saved from the power of sin as well as from its guilt. Hence his name is “Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins.” Therefore must He, who saves from eternal death, be also the author of eternal life. So Christ, who died for us on the cross, rose again for us from the dead; and, having commanded his Apostles, and the Church through them, to “go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature,” he ascended up on high, and, from his mediatorial throne, sent down the Holy Ghost on the Church at the Pentecost, the fulfillment of his promise that they “should receive power from on high,” and that he would be with them “alway, even unto the end of the world.” None could come unto him except the Father drew them by the Holy Ghost, given in answer to the prayers of the Son. There was no way of coming unto him but by faith in his Gospel; and no faith

in the Gospel was genuine that did not purify the heart, "work by love, and overcome the world." Faith without repentance, and repentance without faith, are alike impossible. "To as many as received him gave he power to become sons of God," in likeness, obedience, confidence, and inheritance, "even to them that believe on his name;" and this adoption into the divine family is wrought by the renovating energies of the Holy Ghost: "which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." The new life so given and derived, is eternal, a holy energy that shall never die, a godlike tendency begun in the new-born babe, and sure of ultimate perfection among the spotless, exalted, and ever-expanding services of a heaven without end.

This is the doctrine which our Apostle believed to be true, from the indubitable testimony of God and his own happy experience; which he believed to be "worthy of all acceptation," because all men are sinners liable to eternal death, and "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." This doctrine he preached, and, though learned and wise beyond all parallel with his successors, he preached nothing else; nay, humbled himself from all his skill in words and logic, to preach it in its simplicity, asking no demonstrative power, and relying on none but that which the Master has promised by the energy of the Holy Ghost; and, here in our text he transmits to Timothy, and so to all of us, the same single, divinely-appointed method of persuading men to be reconciled unto God. God keep us

all from the profound folly of leaning to our own understanding, and being tempted of the devil to be wiser than the chiefest of the Apostles !

There were thus, among others, two things prominently present to the mind of the well-tried Apostle, when he set this faithful saying before his young follower in the evangelical office :—first, that the merciful purpose of Christ is to save men from the power of sin ; and secondly, that the preaching of Christ is the appointed method of our instrumentality for that end.

1. “ His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.” That “ Christ Jesus came to save sinners ” from the terrible wrath of God in eternal hell, is a most blessed truth, which should fill our souls with thankfulness and our lives with zeal in his cause. For, O my friends, how dreadful is the thought of a soul lying down in everlasting burnings ! But to make deliverance from punishment the only or even the principal part of salvation, is contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture, and an error of the selfish, ungodly soul, that cares more to escape suffering than to serve Him, whom to know is life eternal. Nay, the salvation necessarily forbids so narrow a belief; for without the entire, radical reformation of the sinner, deliverance from eternal misery is impossible. The vital connection of happiness with holiness is laid in the all-perfect being of God himself. While the infinitely Holy One is infinitely blessed, the slightest deviation of a creature from the divine will must have its effect in mortal ruin. The law of the universe is in antagonism to sin, and the

Great Ruler will not break his law to free a willful sinner from his own sovereign power. Hence, while the Master and his Apostles, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, set before us, by the most awful images, the terrors of the Lord in the unutterable anguish of hell, they lay much greater and more frequent stress on the advantages of the divine service in this life, and the perfection of its rewards in an endless joy among the holy ones and the holy praises of his heavenly presence. The rapture of Zacharias, when he held the young Baptist in his arms, sprang from the assurance that the Messiah was near, who "would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life."

Our Apostle, writing to his other young successor, Titus, in not dissimilar language, says: "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." In fact, Paul's commission was to the same purpose, for he was sent to the Gentiles "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God." But wherefore, beloved brethren, multiply quotations before you who are

so well versed in the sweet and holy Scriptures ; especially as, I trust, we all know by delightful experience the preciousness of that faith whose richest promise is, that it will deliver us from the sin which dwelleth in us, and make us meet to serve God with a perfect heart. Yet thus much of the indubitable testimony has been adduced to show that the aim of our Christianity, and of the missionary work in the spread of Christianity, is not a propagandism of mere opinions, but to secure, as a preparation for a higher life, the reformation of mankind from all evil practices, and the deliverance of the world from the monstrous miseries which departure from the true God has brought upon our once innocent and happy humanity.*

In this design of improving human welfare by the reformation of men's lives, Christianity is not singular. The least reflection will come at the fact that wrong-doing, while it injures others, reacts upon ourselves ; and all but transcendental atheists see sin against God in crimes against ourselves or our fellows. The rules of personal and social morality are so obvious that they are early written on the human heart by Divine Providence, even where the scriptural Revelation has not gone. Whatever were the terms in which the classic philosophers, or their more eastern teachers, defined the *summum bonum*, they all converged to a belief that virtue is its own reward, and vice its own punishment. No one of them ever ventured a word in praise of excess or oppression, or sought to vindicate an evil otherwise than by veiling its deformity

* Romans i. 20—32.

under a pretence of a good end. They wrote much, and disputed more, about the True, the Beautiful, and the Good ; yet the world grew worse under their teaching, and they were themselves but poor examples of their own achievements. Modern experimenters, stealing from the Bible, which they affect to deny, its grand doctrine of a family, have dreamed of a universal harmony before attuning the ever-varying, discrepant strings to the dominate idea of one Universal Father. Nay, in our day, the devil, baffled in his grosser superstitions and open wars against the pure, merciful, godly Gospel, has not scrupled to imitate the livery of Heaven, and turned philanthropist, affecting to have found a royal road to the recovery of man, more rapid and easy than the slow-paced followers of the Christian Testaments have ever trod. Nor are there wanting some professed believers in the sovereign authority of our Scriptural rule, who have tasted of the tempter's sophisms until they fancy that they can improve upon the trite maxims of evangelical ethics. Yet all past experiments of the kind have been miserable failures, bringing contempt on their projectors, and analogy compels us to anticipate like disasters to all similar schemes ; and this for the simple, insuperable reason, that sin can be counteracted only by godliness, and that they attempt the reformation of the mass before that of the individual, or, if they approach the individual, seek to wash off his Ethiopian hue, and change his leopard spots, while the heart within remains degraded and selfish, because "without God."

2. Not so our Apostle. Imbued with his Master's love for the world, he looked upon it as it lay in obscene and bloody wickedness ; and his heart yearned with longing pity over the woes and wretchedness of his many suffering fellows. Conscious of a mission, second only to that of Christ, for the real, lasting benefit of man, but conscious, also, of its mighty difficulty, and of man's utter insufficiency, he sought for the method of his agency, not in the severe dogmatism of the Pharisees, whose self-righteousness had rejected his Lord, nor in the philosophies of a heathenism he was sent to convert, nor in the contrivances of that human wit which had debauched man from his uprightness ; but as a servant not his own, because bought with a price, he asked of the Great Philanthropist, who sits in his cross-scarred person on the throne of God, " Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ? " and, when assured that, though called " out of due time," he was one of those commanded " to preach the gospel to every creature," he humbly, and joyfully, and implicitly obeyed—humbly, because he was not sufficient for any thing of himself—joyfully, because his success in doing his Master's will was certain—implicitly, because the command was his only guide. So he acted, never swerving to the right hand or to the left, never faltering under good or evil report ; knowing nothing, and desiring to know nothing, but Jesus Christ and him crucified, whether preaching to Jew or Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free—enlightening the simple and confounding the learned by the same faithful saying—" worthy of all accep-

tation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

The carnal mind, to which the things of the Spirit are foolishness, could not then, as it cannot now, see the reasonableness of preaching a doctrine and a mystery for the purpose of reforming a world from sin and crime. Its language then, as it would be now, if out-spoken, would have been: "Teach the savage first the arts of life; civilize him from his rudeness, and when you have lifted him above his brutality, you may lead him, as his understanding is developed, to your abstract truths. Confound the skeptic by the evidences of natural religion, and unveil the links of the all-sustaining chain that depends from the Great First Cause. Bring the compressing stricture of analogy, thread after thread, about him, until, like an insect, he struggles in an insect's web. Set before the profigate his loathsomeness in strong contrast to the dignity and comfort of a decent life, rousing his dormant self-respect and latent strength, while you surround him with external forces of constraint and example. Sweep away by the strong arm, and by carnal weapons, the barriers which uplift themselves against the equalities which the gospel enjoins. Let art, and science, and letters go, like gentle, graceful Baptists, to prepare the way for your beautiful ethics; but, even then, keep in the back-ground those humiliating, unwelcome mysticisms of human depravity and irresistible grace, which are folly to the rational and disgusting to the refined. Purge your creed of its effete and antiquated notions, that you may win an alliance

with a liberal press and the progressive spirits of this steam-driven and electric age. Throw around your too sober religion the charms of music, and painting, and architecture, which heathenism has employed with such magical effect; breathe its tenderness in periods of Hyblean sweetness—yet remembering that ears, which can listen entranced for hours to the trilling of a eunuch or the swan-like cadences of a tragedy-queen, will weary of heaven itself, if your homily transcend a score-and-a-half of minutes. The cross is a beautiful emblem, if you gild it on tower, or altar, or the bosom of beauty; but take its blood-stained beams from the path of our lives, lest we dash our feet against it. The world is too strong for your simple gospel, and if you would win, you must disguise it in the millinery of the present fashion!" Methinks I hear the answer of our Apostle to such vain and foolish babbling: "It is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

It were enough for our purpose, with every Chris-

tian heart, to say that this method of saving sinners, under the divine blessing, is the special and only instrumentality intrusted to us as Christians ; and that, going as our Lord's servants to do his work in his field, we have no right to do aught but that which he has commanded us to do ; much less, substitute our judgment for his. The cause is his ; we are his agents ; and, whatever may seem to be the outward gain, there is no real success except so far as he has the glory of converting sinners to himself by the doctrine of his Cross and his Holy Spirit. Even if it were possible (a monstrous supposition !) to make men repent by any method of our own device, we should not dare to use it, for then we should take the praise from him and break our loyalty.

But there are reasons, which we are not presumptuous in discovering, why the preaching of Christ crucified is the only process of converting the world from its sins and miseries.

The world is an aggregate of individual sinners. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son"—he embraced the world in his loving mercy—yet, when the method of blessing is described the noun of multitude is changed to the singular pronoun—"that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." So in the great commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature ; *he* that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but *he* that believeth not shall be damned." The world is to be saved, but through the conversion of individual sinners. We may preach to the multitude, but

only he who by the grace of God believes the word, will be blessed. The sinner is singled out; the Spirit goes and stands before his heart and knocks at its particular door; his sense of personal responsibility is roused; he is brought face to face with his Judge, sees his own danger, and the only method of escape. No outward method will then suffice to soothe his conscience. He must answer to God, who sees his hidden thoughts; and the principles of his life must be changed from selfishness and conformity to the world, into fear and love of God. The truth must, therefore, be such as will produce this inward conviction and meet this awakened anxiety; and such truth the Scripture declares the doctrine of Christ, to be.

The reformation can be brought about only by the Spirit of God, and it is not for us to unfold the mysteries of the regeneration which he has not explained. But God, who in nature has his invariable methods, may well be allowed to have methods as invariable in grace. It is his divine energy alone that fructifies the seed, yet it proceeds through the air and sunlight and moisture and soil, working, how we know not, but by methods he understands. So the several truths condensed in the gospel are the invariable means by which his Spirit converts and sanctifies sinners. His resistless lightning will follow the metallic rod or long-stretched wire; so, when he pleases, the fires of his Spirit thrill through the gospel upon the soul it touches. The mystery is more glorious but not more inexplicable in grace than in nature; for in both God uses the methods of his sovereign choice.

It is true, that the soul is intelligent and moral, and the repentance to be effected is personal and voluntary; and so the truth must act, as it ever acts, morally on the choice. Of all sciences, the science of the human soul is the least understood by us; but God, who made the soul, is an unerring metaphysician, and knows the very truth which is the best, nay, the only one by which to accomplish his purpose of our salvation. Out of all his infinite resources of wisdom, he has chosen the doctrine of "Jesus Christ and him crucified" as the channel through which his sovereign power will subdue the sinner's heart; and he gave his Son Jesus Christ to be crucified, that the truth, which alone could be a channel of his grace, might, in his mercy, be provided. What right, then, had Paul, what right have we to use, in our efforts to save sinners, any other method than that which God *himself* uses and commands us to use?

Yet we may go farther, and see something of the process by which this doctrine works such blessed effects in reforming the sinful soul. For, in the first place, by the provision of an infinite Savior, God takes all self-sufficiency out of our hearts. We see how utterly we are ruined and lost, when only such a ransom can redeem us. We are without excuse, and dare not impeach the severity of his justice against our sin, when we see that he spared not his own Son incarnate as our surety; we must own his claim on our hearts when we see him not only infinitely just, but infinitely merciful; so merciful, that rather than we should perish he laid our help on the mighty Crucified One; and

when, having shuddered over our utter ruin and fearful danger, we also feel the precious blood of the Cross poured like balm into our wounded conscience, and the Spirit of adoption breathing, through our desires, filial prayer to God, sure of being heard, how can we fail to cry with the Psalmist, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?" or, like our Apostle, to live not unto ourselves but unto him who died for us and rose again." Oh, dear friends, these are the truths which drew Paul to the service of Christ; these the truths which drew us within the strait gate; these the only truths which can draw any sinner to God. The Holy Spirit uses no other attraction. "If I be lifted up from the earth," saith the Savior, "I will draw all men unto me." No demonstration of duty however strong, no motive of interest however urgent, no portents of hell however lurid in sulphureous fires, no pictures of virtue however beautiful in heavenly lineaments, can win men to God like a sight of Jesus on his mother's knee, on his cross, and his throne. It is when we see that he first loved us that we love him, and we delight to serve him because he so loved us as to give himself for us. Then it is, that the enmity of our carnal minds against God is slain, and the penitent clings to him like a loving child; then the root of sin, from which the works of the flesh spring with such vigor and plentifullness, is cut, and the soul, grafted into the Living Vine, Christ Jesus, brings forth grateful praise in the spiritual virtues of a Christian life; then the heart, which was a fountain of sin, is healed, and wells out a bright,

healthful stream, gladdening the earth through which it flows to the city of God.

Such is the theory of Christianity respecting the reformation of sinners, as expressed by the Scriptural terms, regeneration, conversion, sanctification—all of which imply a radical change of man's heart from evil to good by the power of the Holy Ghost through the doctrine of Christ; such was the theory which our incarnate Lord and all his inspired Apostles followed; and such, embodied in our great commission, is the only one which we, as Christians, have a right to believe and practice. Conceived by infinite wisdom, made the sole channel of sovereign grace in the recovery of the world to God, and prescribed to us by both the doctrines and commands of supreme Scripture as the method of our working together with God in Christ, it assures us of ultimate success, so far as we zealously exert the allowed instrumentalities; but we lose our time, waste our labor, delay our triumph, and, worse than all, desert the authority and example of our Lord, when we attempt the work he has set us by any other scheme or process, be it ever so plausible, or, in human judgment, politic. That there are various subordinate ways of benefiting mankind, no one will deny; and while, as philanthropists, or members of general society, we may engage in them, we should never forget that they are subordinate and effective only as they are conformable to the higher rule; nay, we should ever remember that we are more than patriots or philanthropists, even Christians, and that we belong to our Divine Master, who has commanded us

to seek the restoration of men to eternal happiness by restoring them to God through faith in Christ crucified, and has made it our peculiar and paramount duty to drive directly at the human heart, not carnal weapons or those of human forging, but the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. The great command is to preach the gospel, and nothing is gospel which does not bring prominently before men the doctrine of Christ crucified. That was the secret of success in the first ages of our religion, and neither human nature nor Christianity are different now from then ; and that has been the secret of success ever since, as the annals of the Church generally, but especially of missionary effort, most clearly demonstrate.

It was when the Church, impatient of spiritual dependence, and seduced by carnal policy, turned to sensuous expedients and alliances with human authority, that a night, dark and polluted almost as heathenism itself, came over its mind and heart ; and it was nothing, under God, but a revival of the doctrine of justification and sanctification only through Christ, by Luther and his brethren, that led Israel out of bondage. Again the Church, even under its most Protestant forms, has, in our later days, too much reverted to the radical heresy of substituting the will and wisdom of man for the will and wisdom of the Creator ; therefore the ways of Zion mourn, abominations of the Gentiles are in the house of God, and we suffer ignominious defeats at home and abroad. Nor shall we ever recover from our corrupting worldliness, and march on with primitive strength toward the millennial

consummation of a regenerated world, until the Church, by all her pulpits, and the voices of all her people, shall return to the apostolical rule of knowing nothing among men but Jesus Christ and him crucified. It is my firm belief that if every preacher in our land calling himself Christian, laying aside all other themes, and this sin of human expediency which so easily besets us, would devote himself, like Paul, to the preaching of the simple Gospel, and the Church, confident only in evangelical truth, would unite in calling down by prayer the fires of the Spirit, as they did at the Pentecost, we should see before a year, aye, before a month's time, a revival of religion which would consume before it, like flame on the prairies, all the prevalent vices and deep-rooted oppressions which now degrade our people and deform our country ; nay, that the God-sent energy accompanying his word, would cross seas and oceans to the land of the Old World and of the heathen, casting down all that exalts itself against God, leaving in its track the fruitful seeds of all true morality and peace, until the wilderness should become as Eden, and the desert as the garden of the Lord. The skeptical world may laugh outright at such a prediction, as they mocked Jesus when he hung on that cross which is yet to draw all men unto him ; and perhaps some doubting Christians may demand preparatory reformations, as if John the Baptist had not finished his work before Jesus entered upon his. I have no argument outside of the Bible against such objections ; but tell me, ye who read the word daily, if every page of the blessed New

Testament does not warrant the hope; and tell me, again, if there be any where within these same leaves any other ground of Christian expectation! Christ must reign, let the world or doubting Christians do as they will, until he hath put all his enemies under his feet; but we are his servants, and his kingdom is not of this world. God will make the wrath of man to praise him, by the self-destructive operation of conflicting vices; but the wrath of God belongs to his vengeance, with which we have nothing to do. Our rule is, that "the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace;" and there is no peace in any human heart, there can be none on earth, until it receives the peace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ. So Paul thought.

Secondly—PAUL'S CONFESSION:

"Sinners, of whom I am chief." The verse following shows that one of the ideas he meant to convey by this clause is, the willingness of Christ to save sinners as declared by the fact of so great a sinner as himself having been called to hope in God. The Apostle knew his own heart as he could not know the hearts of other men, and therefore, though he knew all to be sinners, his charitable judgment of them, and his consciousness of his own guilt, made him put himself lower than all others in sin; while his grateful desire for the glory of the Savior, who had raised him from such extreme depths, made him eager to proclaim to the whole world the sufficiency and readiness of Christ Jesus to save sinners.

But there is here another thought very instructive and apposite to our purpose. The necessary operation in his heart of that grace which brought him, through Christ, to son-ship with God, completely stripped him of that self-righteousness which, in the days of his Pharisaism, had led him to look down on his fellow-sinners, and even to persecute with rancor all who did not believe and act after his fashion. His spirit was emptied of pride in his own judgment and virtue before he could rely on his Savior's righteousness.

A sinner, worse, as he thought, than all others, he had no right to condemn and denounce and hate any sinner; a Christian, sent by the gentle Jesus with messages of mercy, he could not attack them with harshness and rigor. He who, when on earth, never spake a severe word except against such as "trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others," and the temper of whose ministry was meekness and lowliness of heart, would never have tolerated an opposite spirit in a sinner, saved by grace, sent to tell other sinners of salvation by grace; nor could Paul, after his experience and inspiration, have been guilty of such a self-contradiction. Whatever fault the enemies of truth might have charged upon him, they could not accuse him of pragmationalness or pretension. Kind to the lowliest, deferential to rank, compassionate to the sorrowful, and courteous to all, he gave place to every one; and even when, as an Apostle, it became his office to rebuke sin and threaten the terrors of the Lord against willful sinners, he trembles as he utters the awful words,

and sinks weeping into entreaty and expostulation that they would reconcile themselves to God ; for he was an ambassador for Christ, and he had no right to address them otherwise than as though Christ were persuading them by him. He would have thrown away his hope of success, if he had suffered the impulses of the carnal heart to rise up and mingle themselves with the divine motives which urged him to represent the love and tenderness of Christ.

The same lowly, affectionate disposition characterizes all the Apostles. Before the Holy Ghost was given, and they through the cross and ascension of their Lord had been disabused of the Jewish folly, that Messiah's kingdom was to be of this world, the disciples had been prone to revenge and war. Untaught by his merciful miracles, and his innocent, weaponless life, his patient forgiveness of wrong, and his unwearied zeal in doing good, they had desired to see his wonderful power in the destruction of his enemies. Even the two sons of Zebedee, the martyr James, and the beloved one of the twelve, were anxious to call down fire from heaven upon some churlish bigots of Samaritans. Though but a little while before, they had not faith enough in his saving power to cure a child of fits, they had then presumption enough to ask for his lightnings, that they might burn up a village ; and Peter—the rock on whose confession of Christ the whole Church, Jew and Gentile, is built—only a little hour before he denied his Lord like a coward, was fierce enough to fight the whole of the High Priest's *posse*. Yet, after the Pentecost, when the

true power of Christianity had come upon them in the spirit of Christ, all was changed. Barring a few outbreaks of the old man, as if to show that even Apostles this side of heaven are not perfectly sanctified, they are like lambs, following the Lamb of God. We know little of James, but may not doubt that he met the sword of Herod, as his Master died on the cross, praying for his murderers. Even Paul's tenderness scarcely equals that which melts us to tears in Peter's Epistles ; and John, on the verge of heaven, stretches forth his aged hands to bid us love one another like little children, because, " he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." That indignation, and wrath, and even bloodshed are natural, we may not deny. The babe upon its mother's bosom will strike with its little fist, and the crawling worm turn up its sting when trodden upon. Nor is it surprising, that when we see and feel wrong against ourselves or our fellows, and the base opposition of men to the truth and moralities of the gospel, we, who have so much sinful flesh about us, should so give place to the devil as to forget that we are to overcome evil only with good. But it is the grace of Christianity to change our carnal hearts, out of whose " lusts, warring against the soul, come wars and fightings," and the holy Sermon on the Mount teaches how opposite is the nature which the Gospel gives. So from both evangelical history and precept we learn, that we know not of what manner of spirit we are, when we are not seeking to save men's lives as well as their souls ; and that, precisely as we share in the Pentecostal gift of the Holy

Ghost, will our souls be purged from all impatient, vindictive, and rancorous disposition, because the Holy Ghost is the spirit of Christ.

In fact, the mercifulness of the Gospel in spirit, and speech, and act, is another chief characteristic, distinguishing it from any other form of religion, and giving to it a glory superior to all other dispensations of God himself. The rebel angels met only with justice, and all the fires of hell have never subdued one of them to contrition; but when their Lord and ours would bring back rebel man, he sets forth his forgiveness, "that he may be feared," and by his "goodness leadeth us to repentance." The law of the Ten Precepts, a republication of the original law for man, was proclaimed with thunderings, and lightnings, and earthquakes, denouncing inevitable destruction on all the guilty; but the Gospel of the promised seed had been preached to the father of believers, four hundred and thirty years before that awful scene; and when that law so came, it came not alone, but ordained in the hands of a mediator with the Gospel of the Sacrifices—Moses, the Law-giver and the High Priest, the Intercessor, uniting, as the one great type of Him in whom we trust, and on whose cross, righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Our Lord's miracles of healing were more than signs of his mercy to the soul, for they show his method of recommending the Gospel to men by kindness and long-suffering; and, as the Father had sent him, so sent he forth his Apostles, authority to preach and power to heal in Christ's name being joined together. It was this meekness under persecution, this devo-

tion to the best good of their fellow-men, this forgiveness amidst the tortures of cruel death, which made the confessors and martyrs of the primitive ages so honored in spreading the triumphs of the cross ; and it was when a corrupt and worldly church, abandoned of God, because abandoning the spirit of Christ, so lost the true features of Christianity, that, like Cain, it sought to strike down with the bloody hand those whose lowly sacrifice God accepted. But the revival of the doctrine of justification by faith, through its exhibitions of Christ on the cross, brought down again on Christianity, despite of the infirmities that disfigured not a few of the reformers, the spirit of toleration " which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy ; " and the fruit of peace was again " sown in peace of them that make peace." There are those who will tell us, that the violence of Luther and others among his collaborators was necessary in the peculiar circumstances of his work ; but there is no Scripture for saying that " the wrath of man worketh the righteousness of God." That God used the remarkable and bold energy of Luther, as he did that of Peter, for his cause, we may freely admit, without also admitting that Luther would have been less blest, had he been more like Peter after the Pentecost than he was like Peter when he smote off Malchus' ear. As in the case of evangelical preaching, so in this of the evangelical spirit, the history of the Church, and eminently that of Missions, shows that it is the gentle and benign character of Christians, apart from worldly

force, and especially from a harsh, or austere, or polemical policy, which overcomes the hearts of men, and will yet transform all the cruelties of the world into the kindness of Christ.

The doctrine of Christ and him crucified, the Gospel of him who came into the world to save sinners, is infallibly followed by benevolent, charitable, forbearing, long-suffering, humble examples of its transforming power ; because no man, brought by the Holy Ghost to see how great a sinner he is and how much he has been forgiven, will dare to take his fellow-sinner by the throat ; but, continually compelled by the providence of Him who causes " his sun to shine on the evil and the good, and his rain to descend on the just and the unjust," he will remember that he cannot teach the doctrine of the cross except in the spirit of the Crucified. As it is slavish fear which marks superstition, because true religion has its spring in love ; so fierceness and bitterness and severity mark the fanatic, because true Christianity is the religion of mercy. The Apostles excel us in eloquence, and miraculous power, and the gift of tongues, as many may excel us in riches for almsgiving ; but there is one thing in which we may emulate them, without which they would have not succeeded, and with which we must succeed,—the yet " more excellent way " of " charity that never faileth."

Oh for a more thorough conviction of our own sinfulness to pervade our churches, and more faith in the Gospel as the only method of saving sinners ! Then shall we be ready to devote all our energies to the salvation of the world, and God be ready to crown us with quick success.

We are thus prepared, from our examination of the text, and the history of the Apostle, to define the true missionary spirit as exhibited by him, under two terms: Sympathy with Christ, and Sympathy with sinners.

1. *Sympathy with Christ.* Among the truths which our Apostle preached, there is none that he dwells upon with more frequency or delight than the close union of the believer with Christ. That he is not his "own but bought with a price," and therefore bound to serve his Lord with all his powers, is not enough to declare how completely he and every ransomed sinner is identified with the Savior. Our beloved Lord had set the example of describing the relation as of a more generous and elevating character. "Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth." Nay, friendship is not sufficient to declare the entire intimacy; the believer is one with Christ, a member "of his body, of his flesh and of his bones," making, with the rest of the Church, that blessed "body" which shall be glorified throughout eternity as "the fullness of him that filleth all in all;" so that the life, the strength, the grace that is in the Head, pervades each member of all the body. Yet this comes through the work of Christ for the sanctification of the sinner who believes unto himself. The believer is "crucified with Christ," and in that crucifixion the sinful life, which was forfeit to the law and which held him afar from God, dies; but he, by the same token, is risen with Christ, and the life he now lives in the flesh, he lives by the faith of the Son of God, who

loved him and gave himself for him ; and this life is the spirit of Christ which consecrated him and consecrates all his people to the glory of God in the salvation of sinners. It was for this end that Christ was born, having been conceived of the Holy Ghost ; for this, he finished, in his death on the cross, his life of meek, devoted zeal ; for this, he rose from the dead and assumed the riches of the Godhead at the right hand of the Father ; and so for this, the sinner saved by grace is born again of the Holy Ghost, and, crucified unto the world, lives by the strength that is in Christ Jesus. The Creator had many worlds of light hymning his praise through the infinite universe ; but the redemption of our lost world, and its restoration to loyalty and holiness and bliss, was to prove the most excellent of all his works, and to fill that universe with eternal anthems of adoration, higher in ecstasy than angel or archangel had ever reached. Oh, what a glory must that be when its development and manifestation was "the joy set before him," for which the Only-begotten stooped to assume our nature, and in our likeness to be faithful unto death, and to "endure the cross, despising the shame" ! So the believer, like his Lord, counts all things as loss, nay, as vile, compared to the glory of God he has been called to advance by his instrumentality for the salvation of sinners. As the spirit of Christ fills his soul, he glows with the assured expectation of his Savior's glory, and, thankful, beyond all power of language to express, that he has been taken from the depths and the very gates of hell, to work together with God in this his greatest work, he sur-

renders himself with exulting joy to the divine impulse pervading all his faculties, which sweeps him on to the sublime service. Then it is that he feels the closest fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ; and as the Son is one with the Father, so he is one with them.

What love for the souls of men must have yearned in the divine bosom of the Son, when from the bosom of the Father he considered our danger, our misery, and our ruin, and came down in the form of a servant, the likeness of our flesh, to pass through our temptations, and sorrows, and pains; to expire on the shameful cross where men reviled him, and it pleased even the Father to bruise him! and, as the life-tide flowed from His pierced heart into the heart of the penitent crucified with him, so the believer yearns over the wretchedness, and sin, and suffering of all for whom his Master died. His Lord spared not himself—how shall he withhold any thing that he has, by nature or grace, from the same charity! His Lord, though rich, for the sake of sinners “became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich”—how shall he keep back any portion of his means from the spread of the glad tidings! His Lord endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, shrunk from no loss of worldly honor, encountered all worldly shame, nay, counted not his own life dear unto him—what, then, can the work of salvation demand from the Christian—of patience, and reproach, and self-devotion, that he is not glad to render? His Lord wrought while it was day, with all his mediatorial energy; nay, now

on the throne of his glory he wields all his mediatorial sovereignty, for the accomplishment of his ardently expected triumph in the redemption of the world—and the believer is faithful until death, never asking or desiring rest until he is satisfied in the satisfaction of Christ with the travail of his soul. So the Apostle felt, and reasoned, and labored, and suffered, and died. The missionary spirit was his life, his joy, his reward, and his dignity.

Ah! my friends, I have described the believer as the theory of the Gospel declares that he ought to be; but who comes up to the pattern of long-suffering, and love, and self-sacrifice which the Apostle sets us after the pattern of Christ? Oh, were we full of sympathy with Christ, and did the love of Christ pervade our souls, were we indeed so crucified and risen with Christ that we could look upon the world as Christ looked on it from the bosom of his Father, from the cross of his shame, and now looks on it from the throne of his glory, there would be no lack of men to carry the Gospel to those that sit in darkness, no lack of money to send them forth, no lack of effectual, fervent prayer to bring down the Spirit of grace and success. Vain are all our efforts, and plans, and laborious counsels, until we aspire to a closer sympathy with Christ, for the glory of God in the salvation of sinners!

2. Sympathy with sinners. Our divine Lord had no tolerance for sin, but rather than it should go unpunished, he bowed his fainting head to drink the cup of his Father's wrath against us. Yet he had a deep sympathy with the sinner. He felt for

our utter ruin ; but he also felt for our weakness, our ignorance, our evil habits enslaving us to evil, our temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. He took upon him flesh and blood, with all their concomitants of trial and poverty, that he might assure us of his acquaintance with our wants and distresses. He "came not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." And this is seen through all his mediatorial career. His greatest argument with the impenitent heart is his love, and tenderness, and pity. He bears with us in our follies and our rebellions ; he pleads for us with the Father that we may be spared ; he sends his blessings of providence even on the vile and unjust ; he laments and weeps over us even at the moment of our worst rebellion ; he entreats for us on the cross, and, now on the throne, he prays for us continually. Even the woes he pronounced upon the self-righteous and intolerant, have in them more of pity than denunciation. "Alas for you !" he says, as if his righteous indignation was well-nigh swallowed up in his anguish for their eternal doom. You hear no harsh word from his lips ; you will hear none until, his work of salvation accomplished, he shall assume his office of Judge and Avenger.

Yet there was a form of sympathy with sinners, which the Apostle had, and we should have, that could not enter the Savior's merciful heart. "He knew no sin ;" we are sinners ; all sinners are our fellow-sinners. Take the worst sinners, those who have carried their outrages against purity, and truth, and justice, to their extremest violence, who

are most brutal, nay, most diabolical in their obscenities and cruelty, and you may say to the most godly church in our land: ‘Such were some of you; such would you all be, but for the grace which has washed you, and sanctified and justified you in the name of the Lord Jesus and the Spirit of our God.’ But for this blessed Gospel of the Crucified, and the grace of the Holy Ghost, sent to us through his long-suffering intercession, we were all heathen, all impenitent, cruel, filthy—capable of every sin and wickedness; nay, not a depth of depravity in hell that we should not reach. So the Apostle felt, and therefore he did not denounce, and upbraid, and condemn; he had done so when he was a Pharisee, but now he takes his place below them all, as the “chief of sinners,” anxious only that they should become altogether such as he was by the grace of God, excepting his remaining bonds of infirmity and corruption.

Dear friends, fellow Christians, fellow sinners, will any one of us dare to take a higher stand before sinful men in heathen lands, or lands nominally Christian? Ought we not to weep over, and pray for, and pity, and try to send them aid, no matter what may be the shape in which they offend our Christian sentiments? Can we ever hope to prevail, as Paul did, through his Master’s blessing, if we speak not to them as Paul spoke, even as sinners to our fellow-sinners? Oh, communicants of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, can all the sins of our fellow-men offend us as our sins have offended God? Yet hath he sent unto us the Gospel of his dear Son crucified for us, and bear-

ing long with our resistance, has overcome us by his Holy Spirit. We were all once in the depths of sin, and guilt, and shame; and the Gospel alone has lifted us up, and made us expectants of glory. But myriads of our fellow-sinners, in our land and other lands, are still in these horrible depths; the Gospel alone can lift them out, nay, if we be faithful, will lift them up to that glory we hope to reach, and they shall sing with us the eternal song of Moses and the Lamb. Oh, let us send them the Gospel, the only cure of vice and wrong, the certain means of delivering men from crime in this world, and from hell after death! What work is comparable to this? Tell me, Christian, saved by grace, though the chief of sinners! Tell me, ye ransomed ones about the throne, singing, "Glory to the Lamb!" Tell me, ye holy angels rejoicing over the penitents! Tell me, O Son of God, who died to redeem all who believe in his name!

ANNUAL SERMON

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR
FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AT THEIR

FORTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL MEETING,

BY M. L. P. THOMPSON, D. D.

SEPTEMBER, 1857,

THE GREAT PROMISE.

A

SERMON,

Preached at Providence, R. I., September 8, 1857,

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR

FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AT THEIR

FORTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL MEETING.

BY M. L. P. THOMPSON, D. D.

Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Buffalo, New York.

BOSTON:

PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN & SON, 42 CONGRESS STREET.

1857.

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

PROVIDENCE, R. I., SEPT. 11, 1857.

Resolved, That the thanks of the Board be presented to the Rev. Dr. THOMPSON, for his Sermon delivered on Tuesday evening; and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.

Attest,

SAMUEL M. WORCESTER, *Rec. Secretary.*

S E R M O N .

MATTHEW xxviii. 20.

AND LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAY, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD.

THE natural process of our minds, on reading this text, is first to consider Jesus—to look with adoring wonder to Him from whose lips such remarkable and gracious words proceeded; then our thoughts are turned to the little company of faithful and favored men to whom Jesus spoke, hearing not for themselves alone, but for us also, and for all that should come after them, having like faith to theirs; and finally, we ponder the words, and try to understand their meaning, and to get the weight of them on our hearts.

Who speaks? To whom does he speak? What does he say? And what should be the influence on us of his words?

Such, brethren, shall be the plan of my discourse. I desire to speak to you as on my knees, as it seems to me Jesus would have me speak, and, as well as I am able, the things which he would have me speak, and which he himself would speak, if he were personally present in our assem-

bly. It is not by hearing new things that we are to have our missionary spirit improved; but by gaining a deeper impression and sense of old things. We do not need that a dealing should be had with our natural intellects, but with our spiritual understanding and our hearts. It is my becoming and proper office, as your preacher, therefore, to seek to "stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance," that you may be mindful, when this hour is past, not of my words, but "of the words which were spoken before" by the Lord himself.

The eleven were in Galilee, waiting for Jesus in a certain "mountain where he had appointed them." In due time their faith and patience were rewarded. They saw him and worshiped him. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

It has been suggested by some, that these words may not have been spoken by our Lord on that mountain in Galilee; that Matthew, in the brief conclusion of his Gospel, recorded them without necessarily implying that they were spoken at that particular place or time, and that the real scene of them was in the Mount of Olives, near to Bethany, on that more interesting and awful occasion when, having given his final instructions to the

disciples, ‘he lifted up his hands and blessed them, and while he blessed them, was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.’

There might possibly be something gained, through the influence of association, by adopting this view, and regarding the words of the text, with the exception of the words of that loving benediction which was yet upon the Savior’s lips when he was taken up, as the *last* which were uttered by him previous to his ascension. What is mainly important, however, is to know that Jesus uttered such words; and whether on a mountain of Galilee, or in Olivet; whether some days before he ascended, or only a moment before, is comparatively of little consequence to us.

Having laid his commandment on the disciples to go and disciple all nations, Jesus added this for their assurance—“And lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

I. Let us, then, consider—*Jesus*. What we want, my brethren, is to fix upon our minds a full impression of the true divinity of this gracious utterance. We want to feel that it is no less a being than God who speaks to us; else the words lose their power, and our interest in them ceases. We want this voice, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world,” to come to us, clear and definite and unmistakable, from the highest glory. We want it to fall upon our ears and upon our hearts, from the very throne of the kingdom. It is not enough for us to know that Jesus is God, as we know ten thousand other

things, by a mere intellectual perception of them, which fails to bring them nigh to us, and to invest them with real and substantial forms. We want to know it in the living consciousness of our inmost souls, as we are sure the eleven knew it when they heard him speak, when they stood there on the mount, and he talked with them, and when they saw him ascend up into heaven, until a cloud received him out of their sight. They could say, in their Epistles to the churches, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life, (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us,) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us.” That is what we want, fellowship with them—fellowship with them in the knowledge of that peculiar experience which they had as companions of the Lord and eye-witnesses of his glory. We want to know and to feel that Jesus is God, having life in himself, and able to give life to as many as he will ; that “it is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers ; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in ; that bringeth the princes to nothing, and maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.” What we want, before the words of Jesus in the text can fill us with joy as they should, and with strength and confidence and courage as they

should, and constrain us to all holy obedience as they should, is the grace to get upon our souls the full power of that other utterance of his, as we are sure it came upon the soul of his servant John in Patmos: "I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore, amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

If Jesus be not God, if he be not the Almighty, if he be not Lord of all things, Lord of heaven and Lord of earth, then there can be no binding force in his commandment, nor any ground of confidence to undertake so mighty an enterprise. We need the full sense of his divine authority, and of his divine power, to constrain our consciences, and to strengthen our hearts and our hands. What less than this could have been availing for the first disciples? What less can be availing for us? Disciple all nations! Make the faith and worship of Jesus universal! Are we with this Gospel to subdue the world, until 'every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father;' until the kingdoms of the world shall become his kingdoms, and he shall reign from the rising of the sun until the going down thereof? Is this the commandment? And shall it be undertaken? Can it be accomplished? Never, if Jesus be not God; but if Jesus be God, then *yes*. If Jesus be God, it is his right to require this of his servants; and if he be God, the work can and must be accomplished.

JESUS IS GOD. His resurrection from the dead has crowned him. This, in the thought of his

own mind, was the very ground and reason of the commandment. He "came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye, therefore, and disciple all nations." Because I am God, and have authority to send you, Go ! Because I am the Almighty, and have power to prosper you, Go ! Go ! because I am the Lord God Almighty, whom ye are bound to serve, and who is able both to defend his servants, and to crown their labors with success.

We need not listen to Isaiah, as with prophetic finger pointing to the manger at Bethlehem, he exclaims: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." We need not dwell upon the vision that he saw of 'the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, while his train filled the temple, and the seraphims stood and cried one unto another, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory ;' and then take testimony of John, that it was the glory of Christ that Isaiah saw. We need not study that saying in John's gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God—All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made ;" and then go and gaze with that same John into the opened heaven, on the heavenly host adoring *God*, and on the company of redeemed men from the earth casting their crowns at his feet, and saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory,

and honor, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created ;" or listen with him to that new song which they sing : " Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." It is enough to see Jesus risen from the dead. In the hour of his last agony, " the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others ; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God ; let him deliver him now if he will have him ; for he said, I am the Son of God." Jesus did not come down from the cross. He did more than that. He died, and recovered himself from death. He descended into the grave, and returned again. To have come down from the cross would indeed have been a sign which might well have overwhelmed his enemies, and filled them with terrible conviction of his divinity. But that was not the sign which he gave. A more convincing sign was reserved for them, and for the world ; even the sign of his resurrection from the dead, the third day, according to his word, declaring him to be the Son of God more mightily than all the miracles he had ever wrought before, and than any miracles, which, while living, he might have wrought. Oh, had Jesus leaped from that cross to which accursed hands had nailed him, and assuming all the majesty of the hidden Godhead, smitten with sudden blindness and death that whole throng of brutal soldiery and insulting Jews, and then, spurning with indignant foot the polluted

earth, ascended through the clouds into heaven, in the sight of all that loved him, and that stood there beholding ; had he done this, would there not have been proof enough that Jesus was very God to convince the world ? But this, my brethren, would have been as nothing to the proof he furnished when, " having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it," he cleaved asunder the tomb, and came forth, and stood again in the midst of his disciples—as nothing to the proof they saw, when he came, the doors being shut where they were assembled, " and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you," and bade the incredulous Thomas, " Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands ; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side ; and be not faithless, but believing ;" to whom Thomas answered and said, " My Lord and my God"—as nothing to the proof they saw when he stood by them, and spoke with them there in that mountain, where, before he suffered, he appointed to show himself unto them—as nothing to the proof which they beheld in Olivet.

YES ! JESUS IS GOD. It is God who says, " And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

In this very utterance, my brethren, Jesus proclaims himself to be God, for it is nothing less than a *divine grace* which he announces.

II. We may consider *to whom* Jesus speaks. Surely not to the eleven, as such ; not to the eleven, as men hasting to die, and to leave no inheritors of

the promised grace ; but to them as disciples, representing a succession of disciples never to be ended while the world stands. He speaks to his own servants, present and future, living and to live in endless generations. The terms of the announcement settle this for us.

Neither are we to understand the address of our Lord as directed, in such an exclusive sense, to the eleven as apostles, or as distinguished officially in any way from other disciples, as to lay on them the sole responsibility of the service which he had just exacted of them, or as to limit to them the grace which he now vouchsafes to pledge. Indeed, there is much good reason for supposing that the eleven were not alone with Jesus when the words were uttered, but that this manifestation of himself was the identical one mentioned by Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 6, at which it is said, “ He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once.” Some even have conjectured that there was at this time a general gathering of all those who at that early period had embraced the Christian faith. If this were so, then it was really the *church*, in the largest and most complete sense of that term, that Jesus had before him when he spoke.

True enough this is all uncertain. It cannot positively be affirmed that there was a soul with him in that mountain save the eleven. Let it be so. Let it be that he spoke to the eleven alone, as apostles and ministers. In part, it is very evident that his address had respect to them only, in their official character ; yet it was to them, as ministers of his church, as leaders and guides of the entire

body of his people. It was to them as representing the church in whose name they were to act, and with whom they were to be identified in all their labors. They stood before him as the present embodiment of the church in all ages. As such he laid on them this command, and as such he gave to them his promise.

If, in some sense, the promise may be regarded as made especially to Christ's ministers, engaged in their peculiar work, it is equally to be regarded, nevertheless, as made to all his disciples living and laboring for him. The promise must be looked upon as co-extensive with the command, and it would be quite idle for me to consume your time with showing that the command, in some aspects at least of the duty which it imposes, reaches to every disciple—to every member of that body of Christ, which is the church—not to the head only, but also to the hands and to the feet.

It is to the *church* that Jesus speaks. But to the church in what aspect? To the church in what attitude and what relation? To the church when, and where, and how employed?—To the church always? To the church absolutely and unconditionally? To the church doing what she will, and seeking what ends may please her?

“Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth: Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you;—

and lo ! I am with you alway ;—even unto the end of the world.”

. It is not then to the church, absolutely and unconditionally ; not to the church doing what she pleases, and seeking what ends she may propose unto herself ; not to the church always, in any case—but to the church in an aspect well defined, and in an attitude and a relation clearly specified and described ; to the church *doing her Lord's will—doing the commandment*, that the promise is accorded. “ *Go ye therefore, and disciple all nations, and lo, I am with you alway.*”

Suppose, my brethren, that the church of the Redeemer were utterly to turn away from that distinct and specific work which he has given her to do. Suppose that, instead of going and discipling all nations, she should just content herself with occupying and strengthening the position in the world which she has already acquired—with adorning and beautifying her present possessions, and with making herself more august and dignified in the sight of men, in the limited sphere to which her existence is now confined. Suppose she were to conclude, that in the way of extension she had done already enough ; that the gospel had been preached far enough ; and that, as to the nations now sitting in darkness, for her, they might sit there still and forever, for she would do no more ; she would cultivate the ground she had, and leave the deserts to their desolation. Suppose this, and where then would be the promise ? When there was no longer any church in the world going and

discipling all nations, whose would the promise be, and who might take its consolations?

If, when Jesus was ascended into heaven, the church of the first disciples had said: Now "blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ," — we will rejoice and be glad in him, for the salvation which he hath brought unto us, and here in Jerusalem, and in all Judea we will proclaim his grace and make disciples in his name, but we will not go discipling all nations — we will not leave our pleasant homes, and the green fields of our native land — we will not venture among the rude and barbarous peoples — here will we stay, and here shall the church be glorious. Had they said so, and done so, then whose would have been the promise? Not theirs. Who on earth might have claimed it? No man. The promise is to *the church discipling all nations* — to the church distinctly and specifically so employed, and employed no otherwise. It is to no self-seeking, or self-glorifying, or self-saving church, and it is to no home-abiding church, but to a church spreading herself abroad, seeking the glory of Christ and the extension of his kingdom, and the salvation of the world.

The church of Jesus Christ has her own distinct and peculiar mission to perform. He has given her her work to do. He has defined her vocation, and appointed her task. She is to conquer the world for him. She is, by the gospel, to subdue all nations to the obedience of the faith. She is to go forth in his name, and with his word, to make

disciples of all men. From this work she is not at liberty to turn aside, or in it ever to rest. She must subordinate it to nothing, but all things else to it. To bring in Christ's universal kingdom, to fill the earth with the knowledge of him as the waters cover the sea, to make his name glorious in every place and a sound of joy to every ear—this is the great and paramount end of her being and continuance here upon the earth. She would be no church of Jesus Christ out of this relation. She would be an army of aliens, and a synagogue of Satan. A definition of the church was given by our Lord himself, when he said, "Ye are the light of the *world*, a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick ; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house." And Christ's own sense of what his church would be, departing from his design respecting her, is expressed when having described her as "the salt of the earth," he said: "But if the salt have lost his savor, where-with shall it be salted ? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men."

No, my brethren, our blessed Lord does not say, "And lo, I am with you alway," to any church but to one going forth to battle for him against the irreligion, and unbelief, and idolatrous superstitions of the whole world. He says it to a church in arms for him, against all the powers of the kingdom of darkness in the earth. He says it as the great Captain of salvation, to the host of his elect gathered for the subjugation of all his foes. It is dis-

tinctly in view of the universal battle-field—in view of the enemy to be encountered—in view of the tumults, and the toils, and the terrors of that strife which has for its object nothing less than the conquest of all nations, that he says, *Go, and I am with you alway.* It is not, *Stay*, and I am with you, but *Go*, and I am with you. It is not, *Do what you will*, and I am with you ; but *Go, fight for me*—*Go, plant the standard of my cross on every land and on every island—Go, subdue the whole earth in my name, “ And lo ! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”*

In the very aim and essence of her being, the church is a missionary church, a church militant against the whole empire of darkness in the world, designed and fashioned by her Lord for aggressive and onward movement, for conflict and conquest ; and that, unceasingly, till a final and complete victory shall be obtained. For this great and glorious object the church exists, and it is only with reference to it, and to the exigencies of her unavoidable state in connection with it, that the promise of my text is given to her.

Would, my brethren, that this were better understood. Would to God, that the entire church could be made to realize the fact, that there is no promise of the gracious presence of her Lord in the midst of her, only as she is actually employed in her proper work, moving on to take possession of the earth for him.

III. We are to consider the promise. *What does Jesus say ?*

We have seen that the promise is made to the church discipling all nations. It is made to the church engaged in an enterprise which even to this day she has upon her hands, and which is to occupy her energies in all future time. It is not, therefore, the promise of a grace which was soon and suddenly to terminate, leaving the church in the very midst of her labors and her wants, but of a grace which was to continue as long as the exigency should continue which created the necessity for it, "even unto the end of the world."

Literally, as you are aware, the reading from the Greek is—to the end of the age—or, to the finishing of the dispensation, or of the time; which some, regarding the promise as made especially to our Lord's first disciples, and as relating to those miraculous powers with which they were to be endowed, have understood to refer to their lifetime, or to the period about to terminate with the destruction of Jerusalem and the dissolution of the Jewish commonwealth.

Evidently, however, the age intended by our Lord, was that in which his gospel was to be preached; in which the work was to be done which he had just laid by commandment on his church, and with reference to which the promise of his gracious presence was given to her. It was the age in which all nations were to be disciplined—in which the church was to be passing through the conflicts and perils of her militant state. It is, therefore, the end of the world, strictly and properly speaking, that is meant. So far, the promise extends. Jesus declares that he will be with his

obedient church through the entire period of her warfare, until time shall end, and her militant shall be exchanged for her triumphant state.

And, brethren, I am not well satisfied with that word, "*always*," in the text. It presents its idea too comprehensively and massively. I like far better the literal and exact rendering of the original—*all days*. It is not for us, with this promise in our hands, to be looking off to the end of the world, and blessing ourselves with the assurance that the gracious presence of our Lord is to be with us even until then ; but we are joyfully to recognize the absolute coincidence of the promised grace with each intervening space. We are not to cast our thoughts onward to the final consummation, and expect that Jesus will be with us until that is reached, but we are to think of each successive day that is to clapse before that final day shall come, and expect that Jesus will be with us *each day*. We are to look upon the church in her continual march, through all her vicissitudes of conflict and of danger, going not alone any day, but *all days*, accompanied, and guided, and prospered by her almighty Lord.

"And lo! *I am with you*." Brethren, what is that? In what sense does Jesus promise to be *with* his faithful and obedient Church? There is no difficulty in understanding him. As it is said, "And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man," so is the promise of our Lord, "Lo, I am with you," and ye shall *prosper* in the work which I have given you to do. Ye shall have success in it; ye shall triumph gloriously; and in due time, "the kingdom and dominion, and the

greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

1. I am with you in sympathy and in desire. My *heart* is with you. O, blessed Jesus ! can there ever be a doubt of this in the minds of any of thy people ? Can we ever question with ourselves, as we go forth obeying thy command to disciple the nations, whether on thy throne thou rememberest us, and carest for us, and hast delight in our work ? We know that thou art with us, and that no heart in all the universe like thine own is concerned for the enterprise which thou hast committed to our hands. Is not Jesus with us, my brethren ? Is he not with us in our counsels ? Is he not with us in our prayers ? Is he not with us in our labors ? Is he not with us in every thought we think, in every word we speak, in every act we do for him, for the furtherance of his cause and the upbuilding of his kingdom ? Whose servants are we ? Are we not *his* servants ? Whose work are we performing ? Is it not *his* work ? Whose kingdom are we seeking to promote ? Is it not *his* kingdom ? and is not *he* with us ? He, of all the beings on earth or in heaven, is the being whom we should suspect last of all of not being with us. Nay, whomsoever else we might suspect of looking with indifference, or with feeble interest on the work in which we are engaged, he is the being on whom suspicion in this regard can never fall. Men may fail us ; the kings and the princes of this world may look on us in our gospel work with unconcern, or even with hostile eyes ; professed friends may

prove treacherous and deceitful ; but there is One higher than all men, higher than all earthly potentates ; one Friend dearer than all friends, whose fidelity may be trusted forever, and of whose friendly sympathies we never can be deprived—Jesus, with all the capacity of his infinite heart, is with us. He looks down upon us from that height of glory to which he is exalted, and yearns over us, and over the enterprise committed to us, with an interest which no creature, no angel even, can ever fully comprehend.

Why, my dear brethren, we ought not to require the word of our Redeemer's promise to assure us of this. It is enough to know that we have but entered into his labors ; for this salvation “first began to be preached by the Lord himself.” He inaugurated, personally, the work in which we are engaged. And think you that the zeal which consumed him consumed itself? Was it quenched by the agonies and blood of Calvary? Who is he that sits on the throne of heaven, but the very same that hung upon the cross?—the very same that, by the shedding of his blood, was made “the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world ?”—the very same who, after his resurrection from the dead, in one of his appearances to his disciples, when they doubted and were amazed before him, supposing that it was a spirit and not his real self that they beheld, after he had persuaded them by infallible signs, “opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and

that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem?" And now, when we go forth preaching that gospel to the nations, and discipling them to its faith, is not *he* with us? Has Jesus forgotten? Has he ceased to care? Oh, Christian brethren, whatever else we doubt, let us never dare to doubt that we have the sympathy of Jesus in our missionary work. It would be impious to question this. Nay, verily, the heart of the Lord is with us.

2. I am with you by my power and by my providence. My *hand* is with you. The sympathy of Christ is not a barren sympathy, like the sympathy of some men. It is not his *heart* only that he gives, but his *hand* with it. He pledges to the Church the effectual co-operation of his omnipotence.

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye, therefore, and disciple all nations; and lo, I am with you"—with you, to defend you against your enemies, to defeat their counsels, and to bring all their devices to nought; with you, to strengthen you in every conflict, and to make you victorious; with you, to overthrow the mountains and to cast up the valleys, and to make a highway before you in all your goings; with you, to make all things work together for your good, to bring good out of evil, light out of darkness, order out of confusion; with you, to cause even the wrath of men to serve your purposes, and to restrain the remainder; with you, sometimes indeed 'riding on the wings of the wind, making darkness my secret place, and my pavilion round about me dark waters and thick clouds of the sky,' yet truly with you,

ordering your paths and developing your conclusions, to make your paths straight, and your conclusions glorious. "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Behold, all they that are incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded; they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish. For I the Lord will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee. Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. Behold, I will make thee a new threshing instrument having teeth; and thou shalt thresh the mountains and beat them small, and make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them, and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and glory in the Holy One of Israel."

Such, brethren, is the promise which Jesus gives. His divine power shall accompany his obedient Church, and, though weak in herself, she shall be strong in him to do his will.

3. With the assurance of our Lord's everlasting sympathy, and of the effectual help of his omnipotence, there is included also the pledge of his *perpetual presence by his Spirit*, to enlighten and guide, and comfort and bless his people.

We are not to think of Jesus simply as our infinite Friend far distant in the heavens, remembering us there, where he sits in glory on his throne, and caring for us, and deeply concerned

for our cause ; nor are we to think of him simply as ruling and reigning for our good, overlooking the affairs of his kingdom, and ordering all things, with however wise and gracious a reference to our advantage, or with whatever infallible certainty of compassing his ends. We are to understand that by his Spirit, his presence with us is a real presence ; that he is with us in very deed, a God at hand and not afar off, ready with all-sufficient grace to sustain us in every emergency ; to whom we may go in every hour of trial, in every danger and every distress, in all our perplexities and our fears, just the same as if he were personally with us and we beheld him with our eyes. “ If ye love me, keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth ; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him ; but ye know him ; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless : I will come to you.”

It is in no figure, my brethren, that Jesus says to us, “ Lo, I am with you,” but he speaks plainly. It is even so. The Lord is *with* his people.

4. Is it not, also, somewhat in the way of *warning* that Jesus speaks ? Is there not a caution in his words ? Do we not see a finger of faithful admonition lifted towards us when he says, “ All power is given unto me. Go ye, therefore, and disciple all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ; and lo, I am with you alway ? ” Are we not reminded that our labor is to be performed under the cease-

less inspection of his eye? Does he not seem to be telling us of that solemn office which appertains to him as the searcher of hearts, and the trier of reins? Does he not seem to be purposely directing our thoughts to that day when he will judge his servants, and render to every one according to his works?

“And lo, I am with you.” O, my soul, receive the comfort of this assurance; and O, my soul, be not unmindful of the warning. Jesus is with thee, in the faithful remembrance and unfailing sympathies of his infinite heart. Jesus is with thee, by his all-conquering and sustaining power. Jesus is with thee, by his comforting and guiding Spirit; and Jesus is with thee, also, *by his searching and trying eye*. As thy Master, he is with thee, to think on thee and to care for thee; to help thee and to uphold thee; to instruct thee and to bless thee; and, in the end, to judge thee and to reward thee.

IV. Let us consider, very briefly, in conclusion, the practical influence which these words of Jesus should have upon our minds, and—

1. As it respects our judgment of the *sum* of Christian duty here upon the earth. Ten thousand duties demand our attention and our diligence; everywhere there is labor to be performed; labor on ourselves, and labor on other men; labor in the church, and labor in the world, and labor in our own families. But the one end of all labors—the sum of all duties—is to speed on the conquest of the world for Christ. Nothing is duty which does not tend to this. Nothing is great, or glorious, or good, which does not serve directly or indirectly to

hasten it. He is no disciple of Jesus, who is not living for it. He is no disciple of Jesus, with whom all things else are not subordinated to it. This is the end comprehending all ends at which we are to aim. It is the end for which Jesus reigns on his mediatorial throne, and for which he is ceaselessly directing all the energies of his kingdom; and it is the end to which should be directed all the energies of his church on earth.

We must look upon the world as a revolted empire of God's dominions, and upon the Church of Christ as an army organized and established within its borders for the re-subjection of it to its rightful Lord. In this view, a thousand things are, indeed, imperative on the Church, not directly tending to the accomplishment of her great object. She must care for herself and for her camp. She must nurture herself, and husband her resources. She must strengthen and make sure the positions she has already taken, and multiply, in every direction, the arms and sinews of her war. She must train her soldiers, and raise up and prepare the men who are to be leaders of her host; but she must do all these things solely with reference to her greater efficiency as an army of aggression and conquest. She must never look upon herself as doing her proper work, as fulfilling her proper mission, except when she is casting forward her bands of fighting men, and taking possession of new ground in her great Commander's name. She is doing nothing, in fact, when she is not advancing her arms against the foe; nothing, when she is not spreading herself out on the enemy's territory, and

subduing and annexing it; nothing, when she is not “enlarging the place of her tent, and stretching forth the curtains of her habitations.” The cry of the host must be forever, *Onward!* They that lead must cry it to them that follow; and they that follow must cry it to them that lead; and from front to rear, from rear to front, cry must meet cry, *Onward! onward!* until the last enemy has been met, and the last foot of earth has been subjected.

2. In the second place, *courage*, my brethren! *courage!* Think *who* is on our side. Think who it is that says, “And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” “The Lord of hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our refuge.” And hear ye the word of the Lord: “Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the heathen; I will be exalted in the earth.”

“O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph: For the Lord most high is terrible; he is a great king over all the earth. He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet. He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. God is gone up with a shout; the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. Sing praises unto God, sing praises; sing praises unto our king, sing praises: For God is the king of all the earth; sing ye praises with the understanding. God reigneth over the heathen; God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness. The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham: For the shields of the earth belong unto God; he is greatly exalted.”

There is no fear but we shall conquer in this war, for “if the Lord be for us, who can be against us?” Let

“The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together
Against the Lord, and against his Anointed, saying,
Let us break their bands asunder,
And cast away their cords from us.
He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh.
The Lord shall have them in derision.”

Oh, my brethren, sometimes we are tempted to despond. Sometimes, looking at the feebleness of all human resources, and at the magnitude of the enterprise in which we are engaged, we are ready even to despair. But alas, for us! Alas, for our blindness and our folly! Like Elisha's servant in Dothan, when he saw the "horses and the chariots and the great host" which the king of Syria had sent up to take Elisha, but could not see that "the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about him" for his defence, who cried, in his terror, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?"—so we often are at our wit's end, and can see no way of deliverance before us. Oh, could our eyes be opened when we are thus perplexed, as the eyes of Elisha's servant were when Elisha prayed for him, what wonders should we behold! Should we not see "the chariots of God which are twenty thousand—even thousands of angels, and the Lord among them as in Sinai?" More than Israel saw in the wilderness—more than the pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night, should our eyes behold—even Jesus, and the host of his mighty ones encamping round about us.

Let us arm ourselves with the strength of this assurance. Let us be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." "Be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, and work: for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts."

Finally; there should abide with us, continually, all the weight of that solemn admonition which our text conveys. A holy fear should take possession

of our minds ; for oh, the Lord is here, and the Lord's eyes are looking on us ! How should we cleanse ourselves and keep ourselves from every evil thing !—How humble should we be ; how devoted and how earnest in our Master's cause ! How watchful against everything that can be offensive in his sight, and how faithful and courageous and steadfast in doing his will !

We need not be told, to stimulate us in the warfare to which we have been called, that the centuries are looking down upon us, or that the eyes of the world are beholding us. A mightier thought than was ever invoked on battle-fields, to inflame the ardor of men rushing to any carnal strife, should rouse and animate our souls. Jesus is here, and the eyes of Jesus are fixed upon us !

We are, indeed, a spectacle unto angels and unto men ; but this is little in comparison with the fact that we are living and acting, day by day, under the eyes of Him who loved us and gave himself for us, and who so soon shall sit in judgment on our works. Oh, let us carry with us this word of Jesus—*Lo, I am with you*, wherever we go, whatever we do. At home, abroad, preaching, praying, giving, counseling together, toiling anywhere, any way, for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause, let it ring upon our ears and penetrate our hearts. *Lo, I am with you*. Let it strengthen our courage, let it inflame our zeal, and constrain all the affections of our souls, until that blessed day shall come when, having been with us on earth, and found us faithful, he shall admit us to be with him, and behold his glory in his kingdom.

The Moral Discipline of Giving.

ANNUAL SERMON

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR

FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AT THE

MEETING IN DETROIT,

SEPTEMBER, 1858.

BY GEORGE SHEPARD, D. D.



THE MORAL DISCIPLINE OF GIVING.

▲

(12)

S E R M O N ,

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR

FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AT THE

MEETING IN DETROIT, MICHIGAN,

SEPTEMBER 7, 1858.

BY GEORGE SHEPARD, D. D.

Professor in Theol. Seminary, Bangor, Me.

BOSTON :

PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN & SON, 42 CONGRESS STREET.

1858.

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

DETROIT, MICH., SEPT. 9, 1858.

Resolved, That the thanks of the Board be presented to the Rev. Dr. SHEPARD for his Sermon, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.

Attest,

SAMUEL M. WORCESTER, *Rev. Secretary.*

S E R M O N .

LUKE xi. 41.

BUT RATHER GIVE ALMS OF SUCH THINGS AS YE HAVE; AND BEHOLD, ALL THINGS ARE CLEAN UNTO YOU.

CHRIST, being invited, went in to dine with a Pharisee. His host marveled that he sat down to meat without first washing; whereupon the Lord addressed him and other Pharisees gathered with him: "Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and platter, but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness." Did not he that made that which is without, make that which is within also? Did not he who created the body, create the soul also? And is it not at least equally proper and important that the inner part, the soul, partake of the cleansing and the purity?

Assuming that it is important, our Lord proceeds to prescribe a mode by which the moral cleansing, the purity, may be obtained: "But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and behold, all things are clean unto you." These words present somewhat of difficulty, when we consider that they were addressed to a company of Pharisees, inasmuch as the Pharisees were notoriously given to

the performance of these outward acts of charity. They did these outward things, and remained all vile within. An outward injunction, in their case, could hardly touch the infected spot.

Some suppose that the Savior spake in an ironical strain. As it regards your inward parts, all you have to do is to go on with your tithing system of mint and rue, anise and cummin, and all is clean to you—yours a perfect purity down to the bottom of your hearts. This view we cannot admit. The Lord, we think, spoke seriously; uttered before them a great truth, not a stinging sarcasm.

If we suppose that the company of Pharisees gathered on that occasion were, as many were, exceedingly avaricious, given to the getting of gains by the closest and hardest means, and were also given so to hold on upon their possessions that they could not, by any means, be brought to devote them in charity, in any worthy measure, then the Savior's words, which struck at their pockets, would have also a deeper aim, and strike and enter their hearts.

The difficulty abiding in these words comes from the fact that so much efficacy is assigned to an outward performance. A great commentator, however, remarks, in mitigation of this, that it was the manner of the Savior to command an outward act as a sign of the disposition, instead of enjoining the disposition itself. But here the giving act is put in a somewhat different relation. It seems to be put as an antecedent, a means to an end—cause to an effect. Giving according to the right stand-

ard and mode, is promotive of the soul's discipline—its growth in moral purity, holiness.

I come to this, then, as the main topic of my discourse: Giving of what God may have given us as the means of disciplining, purifying, elevating the character. And I might speak of this discipline as both retrospective and prospective.

In regard to the retrospective action, a few words will suffice; and these are suggested by the context. It is clearly implied that those addressed by the Savior were given to injustice. They had sought extortions and wrongful gains. In the strong phrase of Christ, "Your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness;" all there greedy, rapacious, grasping. What now follows as duty in such a case? This, first, and without delay: 'Repent and return from such ways. From being injurious, rapacious men, become generous men; do justly, deal kindly.' Then, farther, the gospel enjoins this: 'Redress past wrongs; make reparation, restitution, as far as it can be done.' But there are cases where it cannot be done. Those who were the subjects of the wrong, and all their representatives, have passed away, and can no more be found. Or the wrong is so complex, so woven into the web of other things, that it cannot be separated and acted upon, so as to be set right directly and specifically. Where this is the condition of things, what then? Here let charity apply her corrective: "Give alms of such things as ye have, and all things are clean unto you." This disposition and distribution of the estate got by hard means, indicate a softening of the character,

even the genuineness of the repentance. At once the conscience is relieved, and the heart is made better by the course taken. The possessions which the individual feels are not his and cannot be put back whence they were wrongfully taken, he chooses to make over to the Great Proprietor of all, by devoting them to his service in the welfare of his creatures. This is the most natural dictate of the heart, once base and wrong, into which the spirit of religion and reform has entered. So was it in the case of *Zaccheus*. Half of his goods he gave to the poor; then the most generous restitution to all whom he had defrauded. Who can doubt the integrity, the moral purity of that heart henceforth? Who doubt that all the residue of his estate was clean unto him? Who doubt that from that time he began truly to possess and enjoy his own?

This is what we may call the backward correction, the retrospective discipline of benevolence. It is not the giving of a portion of ill-gotten wealth to sanctify the rest, also and equally ill-gotten. The principle does not touch such a case. Such a case is only and intensely atrocious and abominable. This is simply a case both of generousness and justice where the opposites of these had been.

We suggest whether this backward correction, this retrospective discipline, should not be matter of thought and consideration now: whether the Lord's cause and the welfare of men would not receive means for their promotion, if there were more inquiring and acting in this direction;—the Lord's treasury receiving numberless fragments,

and some huge masses, which are now in hands that would be better off without them. Let each take the candle of the Lord and pass through his own premises—its rays penetrating all the tortuous intricacies of the past, and then let him do what this revealing light shall teach him to do ; and he will be likely to do both generously and well ; certainly, be likely to improve his standing for this world and the world to come.

But I pass now to what is more generally applicable and practical—the present and prospective discipline of the spirit and habit of giving—giving as a means of spiritual advance, of growth in moral purity ; all within, and all pertaining to one becoming clean, pure. The word used here is the same used by Christ in that other place : “Blessed are the pure in heart.”

In order to make a man clean, pure, particularly a character like that contemplated by Christ in the text, certain evil and corrupting things are to be removed out of him. There is to be an ejection of the corrupt and corrupting, in the process of attaining to the clean, the pure. And one in the category of the corrupt and the corrupting—and this a main one, abiding at the fountain—a grand promoter and feeder in the wrong direction—is the love of money. So Paul names it, and then attaches to it this primal and terrible potency, *root* of all evil—pronouncing the love of money the root of all evil. He means that love of it, which leads the individual harboring this passion, to address himself to the work of getting it—accumulating, heaping it together ; this his end, his great

object in living. The Apostle shows this to be his meaning, in the verse immediately preceding, where he uses another phraseology, "They that will be rich;" this is the working and the end of the passion. It resolves itself into the will to be rich. Christ's word chosen to describe it, yields the same idea on being subjected to an analysis; his word is covetousness, which means, etymologically—have more—the desire to have more.

This, as a very common desire or passion in the human soul, is quite obvious, showing itself on every hand in the schemes and the toils to get more. This, as being an evil desire, most fruitful of mischief, Paul portrays in that flaming sketch: "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." This passion, how sure to grow! If the person dare indulge it, it will grow and get stronger than he; increasing still in capacity, in greediness, in clamor, ever ringing the repetitious cry: 'Give! give!' The already vast quantity of possession only adds vehemence to the cry: 'More! yet more!'

And under its influence, what wrongs, oppressions, crimes, are enacted! And what follies, too! This rage for more, in its height and intensity, seems not only to blind the eyes, but strangely to abate the brains. The Savior, in addressing one of the sort,—a representative man, doubtless, to resort to the modern parlance,—used upon him the rather curt term, 'Thou fool.' Sometimes it is one by himself, 'Thou fool.' Sometimes—and have we not seen something of the kind?—large masses are

frenzied together. There stands forth pretty much a whole generation of fools, inciting and inflaming one another—expanding and spreading out, till there comes a crash and a conclusion ; and the whole surface is seen strewn with wrecks of character and fortune. There follows a wholesome ' pause ; and one would suppose that some abiding wisdom would be derived from the meditations and amazements of the compulsory silence ; certainly, suppose that such a course and result never could be repeated by the same individuals, or their immediate successors. But it is repeated. The same ones, with the smart of the old chastisement in their skins, and the indented bruise of it in their bones, will spring forth, eager to reënact the same old fury. So it is that this desire grows when allowed, and maddens men, and ruins characters, fortunes, and souls.

It is plain, as I have already intimated, that in the course or process of becoming clean and pure, this evil desire must be repressed, and even put out. We come now to hint the way of doing it.

One way, a most legitimate and summary way—may I not say *the* way, no other being wanted ?—*is this*, namely, by giving. Let a person give alms of such things as he has, and he will be cleansed of this foul and ever-defiling desire or passion. But in order to the achievement of so great an end, there must be conditions to the giving. It must be principled, the result and flow of principles—principles in this Holy Book laid down, and by the heart cordially embraced ;—not impulsive, giving as the fit takes, as the sympathies happen to be

stirred. Based on principle, uniform and habitual, it bears a just relation to the means God has put into our hands. This is one of the principles or laws in this matter, that the giving bear a fixed and just relation or proportion to the means placed at our disposal. And what is the proportion ? or what the principle, the rule to be made ?

This principle, that every one at stated times lay by him in store for this purpose, according as God has prospered him, would be sufficient, if we may suppose in him the thoroughly Christian heart. To add this, namely, Let him lay by for charity a generous proportion, is leaving it still quite too indefinite. To say a tenth of all that comes in, is greatly unequal. There is neither justice nor benevolence in this as the universal law of giving. For the object I have in view, this statement may be an approximate ; at least, may stand preparatory to one more definite, namely, that a person give in measure and continuity sufficient to feel it. How little, probably, is given in the Church of God where this is the effect ! How very few, probably, from the measure they give, have any, even the least, sensation of inconvenience. Of self-denial, and real sacrifice from giving, I suppose the great majority of Christian givers know nothing. In all such cases, of course, the entire personal benefit and discipline from giving, is lost. According to the statement now in hand, the sensation-principle, the tithe system, or the law of tenth, can be no general rule ; for, in very many cases, the amount dictated by this rule would hardly be enough to throw any, even the smallest twinges, into the soul's cleaving

selfishness. A tenth can be given, and the man never know, by any appreciable diminution, that he has given any thing ; of course, he can give all that, and vastly more, without beginning to feel it. What is done, is but shelling off some of the loose outer scales of one of these Leviathans of wealth. The giving, to be effectual as a discipline, must be on a principle that shall reach and restrict the desire for getting—the intent to have more ; for all the mischief, and meanness, and smallness, lie in that—emanate from that. On that it is, all Scripture pours its intense and concentrated exprobation.

What principle and measure of giving, then, will administer to this the repressive, yea the annihilating blow ? That principle which says, “ By the grace of God, I will no more lay up treasure for myself,” the person at once and forever renouncing the purpose, even crucifying the desire to be rich. Then, that measure or amount of giving, which accrues from giving the whole beyond a certain prescribed boundary. No accumulation of property, does this mean ? No, not that. Accumulation there may be, and should be : and the amount, the extent of it, is to be settled in the best moments of Christian experience—under the most decisive action of the Christian spirit, and principle—a definite amount fixed under the felt meaning of that great vow of an entire consecration to Him. It may be thousands, or tens of thousands, or hundreds of thousands. More or less, this is its solemn condition and quality ; it is a Christian amount —religiously retained as the means to still larger

deeds of giving and blessing. Here we have the man, all he has, and all his power of getting, possessing, diffusing, devoted to God. With him accumulation has this purpose—it is for God. It has this limitation—nothing for self—nothing beyond a solemnly prescribed amount; no indefinite laying up. It is a great step for a person to come to this point—costing a mighty wrestle, and the bloody sweat of the soul, probably, to renounce the purpose of personal and selfish getting—the intent of property, wealth. It is something every one will profoundly feel in the conflict—the actual doing it. Some have succeeded in the doing, and have stood forth noble examples of character, and prodigies in the line of giving.

We are sure that, in this repression and restriction just indicated, the course, the action, is right. There can be no mistake at this point. If this thirst for money, this purpose and practice of indefinite getting—all one can, to the end—if this is wrong—has on its face the indignant brand of Almighty God, then is it right for the disciple—made his duty by the law and spirit of his religion, to fix a limit, to build a Christian boundary somewhere to this fiery and rampant lust of humanity—desire of possession, to have more. This terrible lust—you can't pet it, play with it, and say, you will keep it under. No man can. No man can serve two masters. It will be one—a single allegiance; one up, and the other under. Hence the right, the necessity absolute, that there be ordained the broad line of demarkation—that there be dug

in the soul a deep and impassable trench between God and mammon.

Let us see now what is accomplished in the way of discipline—moral cleansing and keeping clean, by the action thus far. This first at the fountain—that great, generic, base, cloven-footed, all-defiling thing, the selfish, self-seeking—love of money, will to get it—this in the case supposed, is pretty much wiped from the heart by the one broad, introductory stroke, by that soul's counter and higher purpose, in that soul's true consecration. This higher and Christian purpose becomes the purge, which carries off the filth and slime of the old fever. This purpose, once enthroned in the soul, summarily subordinates and drives out the whole litter of mean and craven lusts. I knew one for years, and loved him, and learned of him, though officially his teacher, and deemed him the model giver of the State of Maine. This was his principle—his purpose. Early and with a true Christian heart, he marked off the sum to be retained, and fixed the boundary; and he made over all the rest, freely and broadly scattering it as it came. The love of money, the desire of holding, he often said, and more often showed, that he knew nothing of it. The faintest breath or motion from this source never, so far as he was conscious, stirred the outer surface of his soul. In the eight years of my connection with him, he gave away probably twice the sum which he reserved as the capital of his business and his beneficence. He is now in heaven, and can we suppose that he there regrets that measure of consecration and sacrifice?

Another thing: the central and despotic lust extinct, at least brought under, then the wrong deeds so apt to be perpetrated in the eagerness for gain, in the rage for yet more—no such deeds will ever be done. All business, all labors for the world, are sanctified by the soul's good purpose, are a part of the man's Christianity, the dictate of rectitude and benevolence. Never does such an one overreach and craftily haul in huge gains upon an already overgrown stock; never take advantage when he can, and grind the necessitous; never throw blight upon others' fortunes, that he may add brightness to his own. Not a dollar comes into his coffer dimmed and stained by his manner of obtaining it. It is all clean money. From all the temptations of business his comes forth an unsullied and honorable name. The great and kingly affection of religion, the love of the heart, abides unquestioned in the supremacy. The other graces take their proportion and place; all the impulses of a pure and genial nature blend to produce a character whose descriptive is goodness; its form, a winning, admirable symmetry.

Of such a character we find that generousness is a prominent, practical attribute. Let us, then, pass on and see how naturally and infallibly the principle I have indicated produces it; how surely it grows and benignly spreads under the soul's high purpose of restriction upon the world, and the purpose to be "rich toward God." We have already noted the fact, that it abolishes, at once crushes out, the leading cause of closeness, stinginess in a man—this cause, the desire of getting,

the fascination of accumulating—I want here the Greek's terser tongue, and the privilege to cry, *pleonexia*—have more. Henry Rogers, in a late work, speaks of a man who always gave a guinea to each of certain good objects. This person at length received a bequest which, he says, “ might be made the basis of a fine estate.” He caught the idea of increasing—rather, that caught him. When asked the next time for his donation to an object approved, though more was justly expected, nothing was received ; not a penny would he give : but a reason he gave ; and the sum of it was, that now he had something considerable in hand, and there was a satisfaction in making it more. Before, there was no such object in keeping, so he freely gave ; now there was an object, and every little he kept told on the result. So he kept it, and so he would not give. Just here we have the secret why men, prospered in the world, perpetually swelling their gains, are proportionally slender givers, often the most grudging and stinted in their giving ; while those who eat up their income, and not enough at that, those who have made up their mind to do good in the land, and trust God to be fed, are among the foremost in generous deeds. On the one side it is the purpose, the desire to get and to add, that dwarfs the soul so ignominiously ; on the other, it is the purpose, all for God, which fashions the soul to that largeness and generous doing. And in the latter case, not only is the measure made over admirable ; the manner of it, the freeness and heartiness, make it still more so. Such an one has not, on every presentation of

charity, to wage a bitter warfare with the base and servile part of himself; has not to debate and contend with and wring at length a few reluctant driblets out of a dry, hard, tyrant passion, who is allowed the keys; has not to go and pound and importune, as it were, at the tight door of a gloomy iron box, constructed for a smooth passage in, but a most rubbing passage out. Behold! see how pitifully poor the little creature is! How dreadful hard it comes! Taking from him his money, is very much as if you tore off the flakes of his flesh; and we can seem to see the wry face he twists into, under the agony of the parting. To the man of the other sort, with the heat and lust for more summarily quelled—the great purpose, all for God and human welfare, kept dominant; to him, it is the sweetest and best of all privileges to give. He welcomes every authentic application; even searches for the opportunity, and blesses the man who furnishes him with one. He finds the words of the Lord Jesus true, when he said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” All is turned to a pure heart—comfort—a fresh fountain of happiness.

We see how important it is, that one have at the bottom and the beginning, right principle. It is a grand regulator. One right principle at the head and fountain of conduct, puts and keeps every thing in the region of it and resulting therefrom, right also. And a principle like the one we have now stated, thus generic and summary in the prevention of evil and the production of good, has herein a proof that it is right, and is of God. Just

see what it does. This one word, giving, carried through on this principle, succeeds to blot out those other traitorous and engulfing words—will to be rich—among the most tainting and deadly in all the human vocabulary. Planted here, doing this, no taint shall ever touch you ; no ill-gotten gain shall ever sear your conscience or burn your palm. The clustering graces of holiness, the rather, will gather around and adorn your character. All that is given will go with freeness and joy ; and the result, the amount imparted, shall stand in the end as a noble monument, not of merit but of grace—the soul's treasure passed over, laid up on the other side, its own inalienable possession, the glory and wealth of its immortality.

Not only shall you be blest in your character and deed, but those connected with and dependent upon you, shall be blest through you, as your intent and prosperous hoarding never could have blessed them. Hence, in another sense, all things are clean unto you. By this standard and course of beneficence, by this example of piety, by the prayers which go up from a heart thus pervaded and consecrated, by such large outgoes of charity as shall keep down the hope of inherited wealth in those coming after, you help form an atmosphere of purity for children to breathe and grow up in. The property which,—fast held and to the last skillfully rolled up, would have been a snare to them, an omnipresent temptation, as it commonly is, and would have taken away their manly strength, and salient aspiration, and achieving enterprise, as it commonly does, dooming them, and passing them,

with rare exceptions, to the shades of insignificance and blank nothingness in creation, as is most obtrusively and painfully the case—this property, dealt with and disbursed on the other principle, is charged with no such perils, is changed wholly to another, a vital element and issue. The carnal and corrupting given, the spiritual is received, and so the treasures of your home become vastly greater and richer. The crowning good is, that all is clean ; your hands clean ; your reputation clean ; your soul, through grace, clean ; your children, through the same grace, clean ; all these clean to you.

We should love to commend, could we do it, this principle of repressed selfishness and of enthroned benevolence to that great company of disciples, who have recently been brought into the kingdom of Christ. How remarkable have been God's dealings with the people since this Board held its last Annual Meeting : the business of the world, by a sudden stroke and shock, thrown into confusion, into complex and prostrating disaster ; men's hearts failing them, distress and ruin settling down upon all ranks and conditions ; then, directly upon this, almost simultaneous with it, the heavens opened and poured down righteousness, and myriads have been made rich in the inalienable possession. How fitting, that those who have come in, and are still coming, we trust, amid circumstances so significant, and outpourings of the Spirit so indicative of the grandeur of prophecy, should join to inaugurate a new order of piety ; rather to bring back again the primitive order and type ! We

would beg of this company of new disciples, could we speak to them, to take their stand for Christ ; resolved to live a life of singleness and generosity to the Master and the race he is redeeming.

Only let it be so ; this elect company coming along to be such givers and workers, and still rising higher in this divine scale, then shall they inspire even veteran breasts with fresh assurances of success, bring light and cheer amid worldly depression and gloom. Then will they be an honor to Christianity, a new argument of its verity, and an added force to send it to the remote, and apply it to those near.

We have reason to take courage from this living accession God is making to us. We may not repine at the great secular catastrophe and revulsion, but accept it as a just discipline, and be thankful even for those quick-working breaks in the invisible enginery of God's providence, which bring men to a stop in season not to leap the precipice.

We welcome these fresh co-workers, because, coming in as they do, we calculate that they come to be whole men—altogether on one side—that they come by that singular sort of consecration which gives up all to the Lord—body and soul, the man and the money—not trying to stand somewhere between, as if adjusting and connecting those great antagonisms, God and mammon ; just where any quantity of professing Christians seem to be standing ; I mean, *are* standing ; and what they are doing ; doing nothing as they ought to do, nothing largely and worthily for the Master ;

cankered, eaten all through with the rust of selfishness ; spoiled for any noble, Christian work.

To any persons remotely meditating the hopes or the profession of Christianity, we say, neither the Church nor the world wants any more such Christians.

These anomalies of discipleship, these abnormals of the kingdom, who lay down a part of the price—give their carcasses and keep back their coffers ; they bring neither power, nor credit, nor a blessing.

Is it not an astounding fact, when there is so much created in order to be given, and when there are so many professed servants, new created of God, who hold it and are bound to give it ; the oath of consecration most solemnly upon them ; a world needing it ; the world all thrown open to receive it, or the gospel it might send ; its millions upon millions brought into vicinage ; and when we may come directly to them, and impress them, and mould them, and put them in the way to heaven ; and yet that the Church fails most frequently and decisively in meeting the cost, as though she could not afford to set her dollars against the redemption of these souls. I fear she hardly puts down annually a dime against a soul. The men to go are oftener on hand—it is the money that lags.

It does seem often as though the worst, the most cruel form of selfishness, is this which links itself with religion and religious people. Oh ! this selfishness of the new man, this Christian worldliness, this baptized carnality, this holy greed of gain ; what a demoniac heart thou hast. Accursed

shape ! hellish thing ! away from our temples and our hearts ! Let the Master come, if he must, with his scourge of cords, and drive him out of our temples and our hearts ; and himself possess us, and fill us with his own good Spirit.

But the blessed Master has another and a better way to purge out the evil, and take the possession, namely, by his truth and grace. This is the doctrine of the text, and of all his Gospel. The Christian character is benevolence—the spirit of sacrifice and of work for a lost world. A missionary spirit is the measure of it ; a giving spirit, at once the measure and the promoter of it.

Giving, then, is one of the means of grace—one of the best means of spiritual growth. If no good externally is done by the gifts, the charities, still a vital and immeasurable good is done to the giving soul ; enough, and vastly more than enough, to justify the deed. The sordid taunt so often thrown, “ Why all this waste ? ” it comes of the sordidness that is equal to the sale of the Lord himself—the thirty pieces in the pocket better than He. I repeat, if no other good is done, there is no waste ; no matter what the amount given, be it only enough, if done with the Christian motive, then the character is set forward, and the Church is brought up higher and nearer to the millennial state. The Church must pass through the work and the sacrifice of establishing the millennium abroad, in order to make one in her own pale. Those final words of her Lord, then, which lay upon her this amazing responsibility, ‘ Go preach the Gospel—evangelize all nations ; ’ are to her

fully, and intently working for the good of others, that the argument. So was it with the Apostle Paul. Mighty as he was in the tread of his logic when he chose, in the main he was his own argument—moved over lands and seas, himself a colossal demonstration. The same with the Christians then—their character, the reign of love throughout, their total conquest of selfishness, no man calling anything he possessed his own; that their argument. What they did, history tells us, and we shall repeat the achievement when we repeat the character, and not till then. Our first responsibility is to be what we ought to be, and what we may be. The path is all open to the attainment, the Divine Helper open to our access; to him let us come, with hearts open and longing to receive the replenishments of good which shall eject the evil—those enrichments of grace, those treasured gifts of salvation, that repletion of the love divine, which shall make us ready, eager even, for any work or sacrifice fitted to advance the kingdom and the glory of the Master.

American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

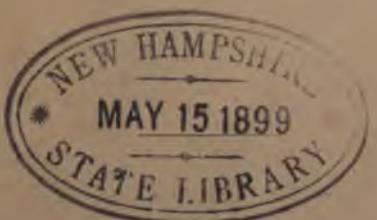
The Moral Discipline of Giving. (3)

A SERMON

BEFORE THE AMERICAN BOARD AT DETROIT,

SEPTEMBER 7, 1858.

BY GEORGE SHEPARD, D. D.



BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY THE BOARD,

Missionary House, 33 Pemberton Square.

1859.

fully, and intently working for the good of others, that the argument. So was it with the Apostle Paul. Mighty as he was in the word of his mission,

266.58
45124
1859

THE
MORAL DISCIPLINE OF GIVING.

A SERMON

BEFORE THE AMERICAN BOARD AT DETROIT, SEPT. 7, 1858.
BY GEORGE SHEPARD, D. D.

"BUT RATHER GIVE ALMS OF SUCH THINGS AS YE HAVE; AND BEHOLD, ALL THINGS ARE CLEAN UNTO YOU." — *Luke xi. 41.*

CHRIST, being invited, went in to dine with a Pharisee. His host marveled that he sat down to meat without first washing; whereupon the Lord addressed him and other Pharisees gathered with him: "Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and platter, but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness." Did not he that made that which is without, make that which is within also? Did not he who created the body, create the soul also? And is it not at least equally proper and important that the inner part, the soul, partake of the cleansing and the purity?

Assuming that it is important, our Lord proceeds to prescribe a mode by which the moral cleansing, the purity, may be obtained: "But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and behold, all things

fully, and intently working for the good of others, that the argument. So was it with the Apostle

2

THE MORAL DISCIPLINE OF GIVING.

are clean unto you." These words present somewhat of difficulty, when we consider that they were addressed to a company of Pharisees, inasmuch as the Pharisees were notoriously given to the performance of these outward acts of charity. They did these outward things, and remained all vile within. An outward injunction, in their case, could hardly touch the infected spot.

Some suppose that the Saviour spake in an ironical strain. As it regards your inward parts, all you have to do is to go on with your tithing system of mint and rue, anise and cumin, and all is clean to you,— yours a perfect purity down to the bottom of your hearts. This view we can not admit. The Lord, we think, spoke seriously; uttered before them a great truth, not a stinging sarcasm.

If we suppose that the company of Pharisees gathered on that occasion were, as many were, exceedingly avaricious, given to the getting of gains by the closest and hardest means, and were also given so to hold on upon their possessions that they could not, by any means, be brought to devote them in charity, in any worthy measure, then the Saviour's words, which struck at their pockets, would have also a deeper aim, and strike and enter their hearts.

The difficulty abiding in these words comes from the fact that so much efficacy is assigned to an outward performance. A great commentator, however, remarks, in mitigation of this, that it was the manner of the Saviour to command an out-

ward act as a sign of the disposition, instead of enjoining the disposition itself. But here the giving act is put in a somewhat different relation. It seems to be put as an antecedent, a means to an end—cause to an effect. Giving according to the right standard and mode, is promotive of the soul's discipline — its growth in moral purity, holiness.

I come to this, then, as the main topic of my discourse: *Giving of what God may have given us as the means of disciplining, purifying, elevating the character.* And I might speak of this discipline as both retrospective and prospective.

In regard to the retrospective action, a few words will suffice; and these are suggested by the context. It is clearly implied that those addressed by the Saviour were given to injustice. They had sought extortions and wrongful gains. In the strong phrase of Christ, "Your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness;" all there greedy, rapacious, grasping. What now follows as duty in such a case? This, first, and without delay: "Repent and return from such ways. From being injurious, rapacious men, become generous men; do justly, deal kindly." Then, farther, the gospel enjoins this: "Redress past wrongs; make reparation, restitution, as far as it can be done." But there are cases where it can not be done. Those who were the subjects of the wrong, and all their representatives, have passed away, and can no more be found. Or the wrong is so complex, so woven into the web of other things, that it can not be separated and acted upon, so as to be set right.

fully, and intently working for the good of others, that the argument. So was it with the Apostle

directly and specifically. Where this is the condition of things, what then? Here let charity apply her corrective: "Give alms of such things as ye have, and all things are clean unto you." This disposition and distribution of the estate got by hard means, indicate a softening of the character, even the genuineness of the repentance. At once the conscience is relieved, and the heart is made better by the course taken. The possessions which the individual feels are not his, and can not be put back whence they were wrongfully taken, he chooses to make over to the Great Proprietor of all, by devoting them to his service in the welfare of his creatures. This is the most natural dictate of the heart, once base and wrong, into which the spirit of religion and reform has entered. So was it in the case of Zaccheus. Half of his goods he gave to the poor; then the most generous restitution to all whom he had defrauded. Who can doubt the integrity, the moral purity, of that heart henceforth? Who doubt that all the residue of his estate was clean unto him? Who doubt that from that time he began truly to possess and enjoy his own?

This is what we may call the backward correction, the retrospective discipline of benevolence. It is not the giving of a portion of ill-gotten wealth to sanctify the rest, also and equally ill-gotten. The principle does not touch such a case. Such a case is only and intensely atrocious and abominable. This is simply a case both of generosity and justice where the opposites of these had been.

We suggest whether this backward correction, this retrospective discipline, should not be matter of thought and consideration now; whether the Lord's cause and the welfare of men would not receive means for their promotion, if there were more inquiring and acting in this direction;—the Lord's treasury receiving numberless fragments, and some huge masses, which are now in hands that would be better off without them. Let each take the candle of the Lord and pass through his own premises,—its rays penetrating all the tortuous intricacies of the past,—and then let him do what this revealing light shall teach him to do, and he will be likely to do both generously and well; certainly, be likely to improve his standing for this world and the world to come.

But I pass now to what is more generally applicable and practical—the present and prospective discipline of the spirit and habit of giving—giving as a means of spiritual advance, of growth in moral purity; all within, and all pertaining to one becoming clean, pure. The word used here is the same used by Christ in that other place: “Blessed are the pure in heart.”

In order to make a man clean, pure, particularly a character like that contemplated by Christ in the text, certain evil and corrupting things are to be removed out of him. There is to be an ejectment of the corrupt and corrupting, in the process of attaining to the clean, the pure. And one in the category of the corrupt and the corrupting—and this a main one, abiding at the fountain—a grand

fully, and intently working for the good of others, that the argument. So was it with the Apostle

One way, a most legitimate and summary way — may I not say *the* way, no other being wanted? — is *this*, namely, by giving. Let a man give alms of such things as he has, and he will be cleansed of this foul and ever-defiling desire or passion. But in order to the achievement of so great an end, there must be conditions to the giving. It must be principled, the result and flow of principles — principles in the Holy Book laid down, and by the heart cordially embraced — not impulsive, giving as the fit takes, as the sympathies happen to be stirred. Based on principle, uniform and habitual, it bears a just relation to the means God has put into our hands. This is one of the principles or laws in this matter, that the giving bear a fixed and just relation or proportion to the means placed at our disposal. And what is the proportion? or what the principle, the rule to be made?

This principle, that every one at stated times lay by him in store for this purpose, according as God has prospered him, would be sufficient, if we may suppose in him the thoroughly Christian heart. To add this, namely, Let him lay by for charity a generous proportion, is leaving it still quite too indefinite. To say a tenth of all that comes in, is greatly unequal. There is neither justice nor benevolence in this as the universal law of giving. For the object I have in view, this statement may be an approximate; at least, may stand preparatory to one more definite, namely, that a person give in measure and continuity sufficient to feel it. How little, probably, is given in the church of God where

this is the effect! How very few, probably, from the measure they give, have any, even the least, sensation of inconvenience! Of self-denial, and real sacrifice from giving I suppose the great majority of Christian givers know nothing. In all such cases, of course, the entire personal benefit and discipline from giving is lost. According to the principle now in hand — the sensation principle, — the tithe system, or the law of tenth, can be no general rule; for, in very many cases, the amount dictated by this rule would hardly be enough to throw any, even the smallest, twinges into the soul's cleaving selfishness. A tenth can be given, and the man never know, by any appreciable diminution, that he has given any thing; of course he can give all that, and vastly more, without beginning to feel it. What is done is but shelling off some of the loose, outer scales of one of these Leviathans of wealth.

The giving, to be effectual as a discipline, must be on a principle that shall reach and restrict the desire for getting — the intent to have more; for all the mischief, and meanness, and smallness, lie in that — emanate from that. On that it is, all Scripture pours its intense and concentrated exprobation.

What principle and measure of giving, then, will administer to this the repressive, yea, the annihilating blow? That principle which says, "By the grace of God, I will no more lay up treasure for myself," the person at once and forever renouncing the purpose, even crucifying the desire to be rich.

fully, and intently working for the good of others, that the argument. So was it with the Apostle

Then, that measure or amount of giving, which accrues from giving the whole beyond a certain prescribed boundary. No accumulation of property, does this mean? No, not that. Accumulation there may be, and should be; and the amount, the extent of it, is to be settled in the best moments of Christian experience—under the most decisive action of the Christian spirit and principle—a definite amount fixed under the felt meaning of that great vow of an entire consecration to Him. It may be thousands, or tens of thousands, or hundreds of thousands. More or less, this is its solemn condition and quality; it is a Christian amount—religiously retained as the means to still larger deeds of giving and blessing. Here we have the man, all he has, and all his power of getting, possessing, diffusing, devoted to God. With him accumulation has this purpose—it is for God. It has this limitation—nothing for self—nothing beyond a solemnly prescribed amount; no indefinite laying up. It is a great step for a person to come to this point—costing a mighty wrestle, and the bloody sweat of the soul, probably, to renounce the purpose of personal and selfish getting—the intent of property, wealth. It is something every one will profoundly feel in the conflict—the actual doing it. Some have succeeded in the doing, and have stood forth noble examples of character, and prodigies in the line of giving.

We are sure that, in this repression and restriction just indicated, the course, the action, is right. There can be no mistake at this point. If this

thirst for money, this purpose and practice of indefinite getting — all one can, to the end — if this is wrong — has on its face the indignant brand of Almighty God, then is it right for the disciple, made his duty, by the law and spirit of his religion, to fix a limit, to build a Christian boundary, some where, to this fiery and rampant lust of humanity — desire of possession, to have more. This terrible lust — you can't pet it, play with it, and say, you will keep it under. No man can. No man can serve two masters. It will be one — a single allegiance ; one up, and the other under. Hence the right, the necessity absolute, that there be ordained the broad line of demarkation — that there be dug in the soul a deep and impassable trench between God and Mammon.

Let us see now what is accomplished in the way of discipline, moral cleansing and keeping clean, by the action thus far. This first at the fountain — that great, generic, base, cloven-footed, all-defiling thing, the selfish, self-seeking — love of money, will to get it — this, in the case supposed, is pretty much wiped from the heart by the one broad, introductory stroke, by that soul's counter and higher purpose, in that soul's true consecration. This higher and Christian purpose becomes the purge which carries off the filth and slime of the old fever. This purpose, once enthroned in the soul, summarily subordinates and drives out the whole litter of mean and craven lusts. I knew one for years, and loved him, and learned of him, though officially his teacher, and deemed him the model giver of the

ully, and intently working for the good of others, that the argument. So was it with the Apostle

14 THE MORAL DISCIPLINE OF GIVING.

every little he kept told on the result. So he kept it, and so he would not give. Just here we have the secret why men, prospered in the world, perpetually swelling their gains, are proportionally slender givers, often the most grudging and stinted in their giving ; while those who eat up their income, and not enough at that, those who have made up their mind to do good in the land, and trust God to be fed, are among the foremost in generous deeds. On the one side it is the purpose, the desire to get and to add, that dwarfs the soul so ignominiously ; on the other, it is the purpose, all for God, which fashions the soul to that largeness and generous doing. And in the latter case, not only is the measure made over admirable ; the manner of it, the freeness and heartiness, make it still more so. Such an one has not, on every presentation of charity, to wage a bitter warfare with the base and servile part of himself ; has not to debate and contend with and wring at length a few reluctant driblets out of a dry, hard, tyrant passion, who is allowed the keys ; has not to go and pound and importune, as it were, at the tight door of a gloomy iron box, constructed for a smooth passage in, but a most rubbing passage out. Behold ! see how pitifully poor the little creature is ! How dreadful hard it comes ! Taking from him his money is very much as if you tore off the flakes of his flesh ; and we can seem to see the wry face he twists into, under the agony of the parting. To the man of the other sort, with the heat and lust for more summarily quelled,—the great pur-

pose, all for God and human welfare, kept dominant,—to him it is the sweetest and best of all privileges to give. He welcomes every authentic application; even searches for the opportunity, and blesses the man who furnishes him with one. He finds the words of the Lord Jesus true, when he said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” All is turned to a pure heart-comfort—a fresh fountain of happiness.

We see how important it is that one have, at the bottom and the beginning, right principle. It is a grand regulator. One right principle at the head and fountain of conduct, puts and keeps every thing in the region of it, and resulting therefrom, right also. And a principle like the one we have now stated, thus generic and summary in the prevention of evil and the production of good, has herein a proof that it is right, and is of God. Just see what it does. This one word, giving, carried through on this principle, succeeds to blot out those other traitorous and ingulfling words—will to be rich—among the most tainting and deadly in all the human vocabulary. Planted here, doing this, no taint shall ever touch you; no ill-gotten gain shall ever sear your conscience or burn your palm. The clustering graces of holiness, the rather, will gather around and adorn your character. All that is given will go with freeness and joy; and the result, the amount imparted, shall stand in the end as a noble monument, not of merit, but of grace—the soul’s treasure passed over, laid

fully, and intently working for the good of others, that the argument. So was it with the Apostle

up on the other side, its own inalienable possession, the glory and wealth of its immortality.

Not only shall you be blessed in your character and deed, but those connected with and dependent upon you shall be blessed through you, as your intent and prosperous hoarding never could have blessed them. Hence, in another sense, all things are clean unto you. By this standard and course of beneficence, by this example of piety, by the prayers which go up from a heart thus pervaded and consecrated, by such large outgoes of charity as shall keep down the hope of inherited wealth in those coming after, you help form an atmosphere of purity for children to breathe and grow up in. The property which — fast held and to the last skillfully rolled up — would have been a snare to them, an omnipresent temptation, as it commonly is, and would have taken away their manly strength, and salient aspiration, and achieving enterprise, as it commonly does, dooming them, and passing them, with rare exceptions, to the shades of insignificance and blank nothingness in creation, as is most obtrusively and painfully the case, — this property, dealt with and disbursed on the other principle, is charged with no such perils, is changed wholly to another, a vital element and issue. The carnal and corrupting given, the spiritual is received, and so the treasures of your home become vastly greater and richer. The crowning good is, that all is clean; your hands clean; your reputation clean; your soul, through grace, clean; your

children, through the same grace, clean ; all these clean to you.

We should love to commend, could we do it, this principle of repressed selfishness and of enthroned benevolence to that great company of disciples, who have recently been brought into the kingdom of Christ. How remarkable have been God's dealings with the people since this Board held its last Annual Meeting ! the business of the world, by a sudden stroke and shock, thrown into confusion, into complex and prostrating disaster ; men's hearts failing them, distress and ruin settling down upon all ranks and conditions ; then, directly upon this, almost simultaneous with it, the heavens opened and poured down righteousness, and myriads have been made rich in the inalienable possession. How fitting that those who have come in, and are still coming, we trust, amid circumstances so significant, and outpourings of the Spirit so indicative of the grandeur of prophecy, should join to inaugurate a new order of piety ; rather to bring back again the primitive order and type ! We would beg of this company of new disciples, could we speak to them, to take their stand for Christ ; resolved to live a life of singleness and generosity to the Master and the race he is redeeming.

Only let it be so ; this elect company coming along to be such givers and workers, and still rising higher in this divine scale, then shall they inspire even veteran breasts with fresh assurances of success, bring light and cheer amid worldly depression and gloom. Then will they be an honor to

ully, and intently working for the good of others, hat the argument. So was it with the Apostle

18 THE MORAL DISCIPLINE OF GIVING.

Christianity, a new argument of its verity, and an added force to send it to the remote, and apply it to those near.

We have reason to take courage from this living accession God is making to us. We may not repine at the great secular catastrophe and revulsion, but accept it as a just discipline, and be thankful even for those quick-working breaks in the invisible enginery of God's providence, which bring men to a stop in season not to leap the precipice.

We welcome these fresh co-workers, because, coming in as they do, we presume that they come to be whole men,—altogether on one side,—that they come by that singular sort of consecration which gives up all to the Lord—body and soul, the man and the money—not trying to stand some where between, as if adjusting and connecting those great antagonisms, God and Mammon; just where any quantity of professing Christians seem to be standing; I mean, *are* standing; and what they are doing; doing nothing as they ought to do, nothing largely and worthily for the Master; cankered, eaten all through with the rust of selfishness; spoiled for any noble, Christian work.

To any persons remotely meditating the hopes or the profession of Christianity, we say, neither the Church nor the world wants any more such Christians. These anomalies of discipleship, these abnormals of the kingdom, who lay down a part of the price—give their carcasses and keep back their coffers; they bring neither power, nor credit, nor a blessing.

Is it not an astounding fact, when there is so much created in order to be given, and when there are so many professed servants, new created of God, who hold it and are bound to give it; the oath of consecration most solemnly upon them; a world needing it; the world all thrown open to receive it, or the gospel it might send; its millions upon millions brought into vicinage; and when we may come directly to them, and impress them, and mold them, and put them in the way to heaven; and yet that the Church fails most frequently and decisively in meeting the cost, as though she could not afford to set her dollars against the redemption of these souls! I fear she hardly puts down annually a dime against a soul. The men to go are oftener on hand — it is the money that lags.

It does seem often as though the worst, the most cruel form of selfishness, is this which links itself with religion and religious people. O! this selfishness of the new man — this Christian worldliness — this baptized carnality — this holy greed of gain; what a demoniac heart thou hast! Accursed shape! hellish thing! away from our temples and our hearts! Let the Master come, if he must, with his scourge of cords, and drive him out of our temples and our hearts; and himself possess us, and fill us with his own good Spirit.

But the blessed Master has another and a better way to purge out the evil, and take the possession, namely, by his truth and grace. This is the doctrine of the text, and of all his Gospel. The Christian character is benevolence — the spirit of sacri-

fully, and intently working for the good of others, that the argument. So was it with the Apostle

fice and of work for a lost world. A missionary spirit is the measure of it ; a giving spirit, at once the measure and the promoter of it.

Giving, then, is one of the means of grace—one of the best means of spiritual growth. If no good externally is done by the gifts, the charities, still a vital and immeasurable good is done to the giving soul ; enough, and vastly more than enough, to justify the deed. The sordid taunt so often thrown, “ Why all this waste ? ” it comes of the sordidness that is equal to the sale of the Lord himself—the thirty pieces in the pocket better than He. I repeat, if no other good is done, there is no waste ; no matter what the amount given, be it only enough, if done with the Christian motive, then the character is set forward, and the Church is brought up higher and nearer to the millennial state. The Church must pass through the work and the sacrifice of establishing the millennium abroad, in order to make one in her own pale. Those final words of her Lord, then, which lay upon her this amazing responsibility, “ Go preach the Gospel—evangelize all nations,” are to her an untold heritage of blessings and of blessedness. They embody the grand corrective—the expulsion of her deadliest foes ; they are to her the necessary means of the victory, and the kingdom, and the crown ; I mean on this ground of attainment—personal, separate fitness, reached by the culture and through the conflict of beneficent giving and doing. The question before us is, “ Will we meet these conditions, and have the millennium at

home ; the kingdom within us — not forgetting the one condition our Lord so significantly marks — giving alms of such things as we have ?”

To very many, this, as a means of grace — of spiritual advance — stands in the first place, and is indispensable ; stands in a sense even before prayer — they being ahead in prayer, behind in giving. To all those, then, who have given leanly and grudgingly, we say, Arise and give — give bountifully — give heartily — give willfully — just because something within resists and says, I won’t. Give the more and still more, from the very teeth and grip of the old retaining passion. Give with the measure and intent to crucify it ; — that hundred the nail, that thousand the spike, that ten thousand the spear, and so proceed and persist till the base and slimy thing is wholly dead.

And in our dealings with others — the minister, in his appeals to his people, must come to them with some authority, with a worthy object, and with a sizable claim. A small matter will not do the business with men, taking them as they rise. The heart of the majority is so snugly shut up — the orifice not unfrequently all tight and twisted and gnarled — if you would come upon it with any likelihood, it must be, not merely with a sharp tool, but with some bulk and weight. Pry at it with a massive lever ; some little local appeal will not make a passage. The field is the world — the instrument also. Then make the big world into a wedge, and drive that in, and so you shall succeed, and they and the world shall be the better for it.

illy, and intently working for the good of others, that the argument. So was it with the Apostle

Giving — doing — sacrificing, on the right scale, is not only the means of grace to ourselves, it is the secret of power in what we do for the needy or perishing. Money so given that it does us good in the giving, does, we believe, vastly more good in its going forth. It takes, so to speak, an embalming and vitalizing from the heart it leaves, which gives it, or the truth it commissions, an imbedding in the hearts it goes to. A thorough victory over selfishness, achieved and shown on the part of Christians and the Church, becomes the miracle of the Gospel — its moral sign, which opens a path for it to the souls of sceptical or idolatrous men. What economy appears in the arrangement of means, and what responsibility it imposes, that our condition of power toward the world is simply that the Gospel, by our whole reception of it, has become a power upon us — first, a power upon us, then a power within, and a power emanant. The Gospel living in us, and working out, is its own witness. In this condition, we need spend no time in preliminaries, none in philosophizing or proving. Filled full of it ourselves, that is the argument; and overflowing, that the argument; and giving bountifully, and intently working for the good of others, that the argument. So was it with the apostle Paul. Mighty as he was in the tread of his logic when he chose, in the main he was his own argument — moved over lands and seas, himself a colossal demonstration. The same with the Christians then — their character, the reign of love throughout, their total con-

quest of selfishness, no man calling any thing he possessed his own ; that their argument. What they did, history tells us, and we shall repeat the achievement when we repeat the character, and not till then. Our first responsibility is to be what we ought to be, and what we may be. The path is all open to the attainment, the Divine Helper open to our access ; to him let us come, with hearts open and longing to receive the replenishments of good which shall eject the evil — those enrichments of grace, those treasured gifts of salvation, that repletion of the love divine, which shall make us ready, eager even, for any work or sacrifice fitted to advance the Kingdom and the Glory of the Master.

fully, and intently working for the good of others, that the argument. So was it with the Apostle

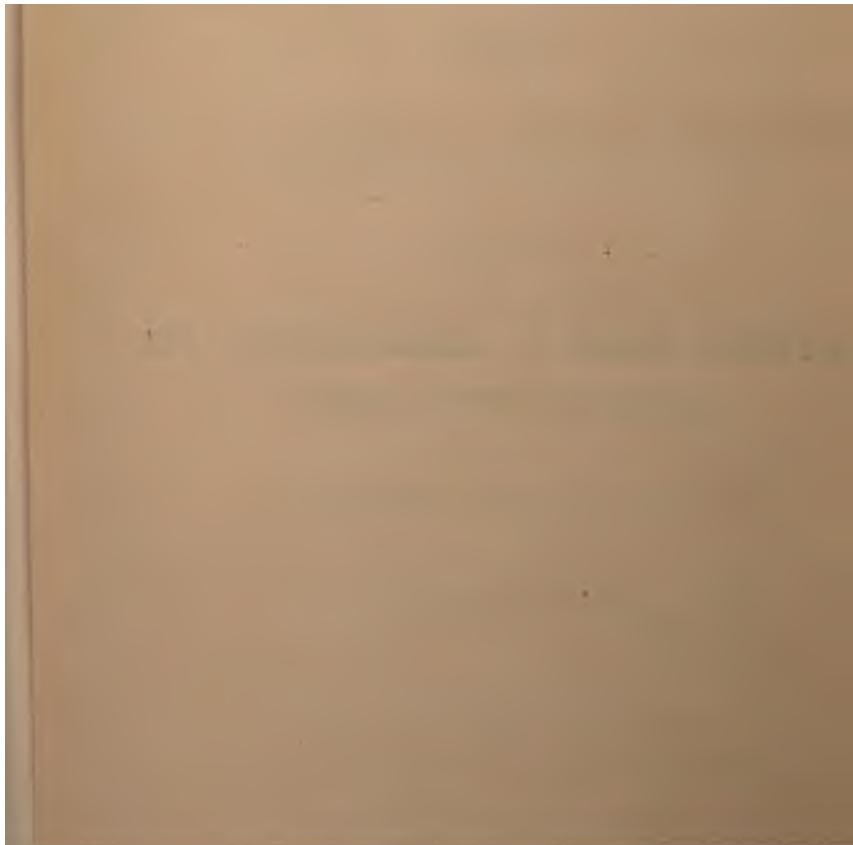
DR. PATTERSON'S SERMON

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR
FOREIGN MISSIONS,

PREACHED AT PHILADELPHIA, PA.,

OCTOBER 2, 1859.



Elements of Christianity that tend to Secure its Diffusion and
Universal Prevalence.

~~~~~  
A

(14)

## S E R M O N ,

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR

## FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AT THE

MEETING IN PHILADELPHIA, PA.

OCTOBER 2, 1859.

---

BY ROBERT W. PATTERSON, D. D.  
Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, Chicago, Ill.

---

BOSTON:

PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN & SON, 42 CONGRESS STREET.

1859.

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

---

PHILADELPHIA, PA., OCTOBER, 1859.

*Resolved*, That the thanks of the Board be presented to the Rev. Dr. PATTERSON for his Sermon, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.

Attest,

SAMUEL M. WORCESTER, *Rec. Secretary.*

## S E R M O N .

---

MATTHEW xiii. 33.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE UNTO LEAVEN, WHICH A WOMAN TOOK, AND HID IN THREE MEASURES OF MEAL, TILL THE WHOLE WAS LEAVENED.

OUR Savior gave his disciples many striking lessons, in relation to the nature of his kingdom. Most of his parables are designed to illustrate this subject. And many of his more direct teachings have the same bearing and intent. Why did he so much dwell on this theme? I think we may find the reason in the fact, that the kingdom of heaven must be planted and have its growth in the understandings and hearts of intelligent and moral beings, who become co-workers with God in the sowing, reception and culture of the seeds of divine truth, that are made to germinate and bring forth their appointed fruits of holiness and glory to Christ. We must know what the elements of the kingdom and the working of these elements are, to be rightly prepared to give them their fit place in our own souls, and to apply them wisely and efficaciously for the establishment of the kingdom in the earth. And in this light I know of no words of Jesus

that are more full of weighty instruction than those which have been selected as the text for the present discourse. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." The leaven is the truths and influences of the Gospel. The measures of meal are not merely the elect portion of mankind, but the mass of our fallen race. The leaven has been hid in this mass, having been deposited deep in the hearts of many men and women and children, who have been brought to feel its power. It is self-diffusive. Its most important effects are produced silently, and the world at large fails to recognize them, or is even unbelieving as it regards their reality. But still the leavening process is continued, and will surely go on until all the measures of the meal shall be leavened.

Without further exposition or expansion of the text, by any direct method, I will proceed to call your attention to some of those elements of Christianity, which tend to secure its diffusion and universal prevalence in the world; and which it becomes us to use wisely and earnestly in our relation to the great leavening process. And in doing this, I can best subserve the practical end I have in view, by a very plain and simple exhibition of the subject. I wish to show you, my brethren, if I can, that our holy religion, considered as a scheme of vitalizing forces, is, in all its great, characteristic features, wonderfully prophetic of that glorious day for whose coming we pray and labor, when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the whole earth. And in the

---

development of this truth for our encouragement, I trust we shall all find motives, at each successive step, to stimulate us to increasing zeal and activity in the noble work which has brought us together in this holy convocation.

At the basis of all our faith in the Gospel, lies the fact that it is specially and wonderfully adapted to meet the moral nature and necessities of sinful man. The human soul spontaneously reaches forth after the knowledge of such a personal and perfect God as the Bible reveals; such a manifestation of God, in union with humanity, as the person and incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ have exhibited; such a sacrifice for sin, as that which was offered on the cross of Calvary; such a fact of spiritual and divine agency for the illumination, regeneration and sanctification of darkened, corrupted and helpless men, as the Christian doctrine of the Holy Ghost unfolds; such a prospect of life and immortality, as the Gospel brings into clear light. I take this known adaptation of our holy religion to answer the practical ends of a religion for the world as a first fact, not to be argued, but *assumed*, in the discussion I am to prosecute on this occasion. The Gospel is not, like other religions, essentially local, or fitted to meet only some peculiar phase of mental development during a limited period of human history. It is not one-sided, like other religions, recognizing but a single great truth, or providing for only one among many human necessities. It excludes all hurtful elements, and embraces all those positive elements which must enter into a religion that is to

commend itself to man as man ; to all nations, in all ages of the world's history. Had not this been true, it could never have been securely *deposited* in the measures of meal ; or, when hidden, it would speedily have been worked out, and excluded forever from human thought and memory. But it found its way down into the hearts of the first disciples, and there began to operate in that long process of self-diffusion, which I am now to consider and illustrate, as far as the time allotted me will permit.

Let me begin the series of remarks which I have to offer, by reminding you that the religion which constitutes the leaven that has been set at work in the world by our Lord, develops, first of all, in the hearts of those who embrace it, *a deep and grateful love towards God, as he reveals himself in the Gospel of Christ* — a love which begets an irrepressible desire to proclaim abroad the excellence and grace of the divine Person to whom it is drawn forth.

Other religions teach men to acknowledge and worship divinities that are conceived of as shadowy and impersonal, or, if personal and sovereign, as stern and arbitrary, if not revengeful, bloody, and grossly impure. Such gods may be reverenced and feared, but not loved ; and their worshipers may labor to tread down and destroy, or at least to subjugate to an iron rule, every neighboring people that does not receive their religion. Nay, such divinities may obtain a certain hold upon the *consciences* of tribes or nations, that are sensible of *needing* a higher deity than their fathers have been accus-

tomed to adore ; but a religion that does not constrain those who profess it, *by love and gratitude*, to make it known to the multitudes who are ignorant of its God, will never become permanently self-diffusive. It will neither stir up its votaries to self-denying and continuous endeavors to publish the character and claims of the divinity whom it acknowledges, nor will it win the *hearts* of the people whom it may convert, by force or political policy. For this reason alone, no religion, aside from Christianity, could ever become the religion of the world, even if, in other respects, it fulfilled the necessary conditions of catholicity and universality. But how does the religion of *Jesus* appeal to the affections and the grateful emotions of every soul that begins to feel its power ! How does it not only *command*, but *awaken* a warm, responsive love towards him who has first loved sinners ! The pouring abroad of God's love in the heart of the believer who has come to trust in a Savior who died for him, while he was yet an enemy to his Creator and Father, kindles a new and grateful love in that heart, which must find utterance in the praises of its gracious Lord and Redeemer. It was most natural for the lepers, whom Jesus had cleansed, to go and blaze abroad the matter. And so is it natural for the renewed and pardoned sinner, who has felt the warming of divine love, through the grace of Jesus Christ, to go, unbidden, and

“——Tell to sinners round,  
What a dear Savior he has found.”

And in proportion as this affection towards God

in Christ is cherished and developed, it manifests itself *increasingly* in zeal for the extension of the honor of Him by whose grace it has been awakened in the soul. Hence, a genuine revival of religion is always attended, as was that of the Pentecost, by an unwonted zeal for the glory of God. Every newly-quickened Christian, as well as every newborn believer, is in haste to tell to others the beauty and excellence of that lovely Redeemer, who has been freshly revealed to his admiring view. And so, as the work of salvation goes forward in the hearts of *many* individuals, the Church is more and more melted together in that love to her common Lord, which leads to united and resolute endeavors to spread the knowledge of Jesus far and wide, even to earth's remotest bounds. And every lost soul that is brought to discover that the disciples of Christ do really *lore*, as well as reverence, their Lord and Master, is led to inquire who and what the glorious Person is, who is declared to be the one "altogether lovely," and the chief "among ten thousand." The question thus becomes a common one, and it is pressed, not in derision, but with serious and interested thoughtfulness, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" Even the darkened heathen is induced to ask, with excited mind, "Who is your God, that you should come to us, over continents and oceans, to tell us of his goodness and love? What can there be in *him*, that so fills you with zeal to publish his name all over the world?" Thus, while the love of Christ constrains his followers, as it did the great Apostle

of the Gentiles, to show forth his praises far and near, it commands their Lord and Savior to the thoughtful hearer of the Gospel, as possessing personal *attractions* such as belong only to the Christian's God. Such a religion will gain access to the hearts of sinful men, and power over them, more and more rapidly, in proportion as it multiplies genuine converts, alike in Christian and heathen lands. I tell you, my brethren, this distinguishing fact, that Christianity begets and cultivates an earnest *personal love* towards God in Christ, contains within itself a prophecy of the Gospel's universal diffusion in the world, which no discouraging signs of any dark period can eclipse. We read this prophecy in all the hymns, and prayers, and devotional books, of the Christian Church, from her organization at Jerusalem to the present day, of her renewed progress and hope. We read it in the face of every loving and grateful disciple of Jesus, whether he be a prince or a peasant, a slave or a lord, a child of fortune or of poverty, a steward of many or few talents. Such a religion will work on in its leavening process, until the whole mass of our corrupted and perishing humanity shall be leavened.

My second remark will be almost a mere expansion of that which has just been made. But it will be seen to have its peculiar phase of interest and importance. The Gospel, as a power in the hearts of those who receive it, kindles and sustains a *desire to be like God in Christ*, as to the *exercise* of love and compassion.

It is a law of mind, that we should desire to resemble those persons whom we admire and love ; and we spontaneously copy their most conspicuous traits of character. It has been often said, that a people will become like the God they worship. This is especially true, if the God worshiped be regarded as possessing and exercising attributes of character which strongly appeal to the active sympathies of the worshipers. Accordingly, we find that those pagans who worship cruel and impure gods, are cruel and impure themselves. Their worship is both an effect and a cause of their lamentable depravity. In like manner, the Christian's worship of God, as he is revealed in his Son, tends continually to assimilate the worshiper to the glorious object of his adoration. But there is in this case a *peculiar* reason for earnest desire and endeavor to transcribe the moral traits of the God to whom the homage is paid, which does not operate to any considerable degree among the worshipers of false deities. The God of the Mohammedan and the gods of the heathen, as we have seen, do not inspire much love towards themselves in the hearts of their votaries. They engender and develop superstitious fears, and appeal to the morbid and misguided consciences of their devotees ; but they draw forth no pæans of real gratitude and affection, and conduct to no adoring views of any divine beauties and glories which they are believed to possess and unfold. And, therefore, while their worshipers do naturally copy their unholy attributes, on the principle of moral affinity, they are not

impelled, by grateful love, to imitate any personal excellencies with which they are thought to be invested.

But the children of God by faith in Christ, while attracted towards their Lord by his divine *loveliness*, are in a corresponding degree filled with earnest longings to become conformed to his moral image; and especially are such desires developed in their minds in relation to those traits and graces in the character of their Savior, which have most affectingly appealed to their own hearts. As often, therefore, as they remember that divine love which has been so amazingly displayed in the sending of Jesus from heaven to earth, and in his humiliation and toils and sorrows and agonies for their redemption, they hear a voice addressing their grateful affections, and calling upon them to imitate the example of their divine Father and their blessed Master, in point of self-sacrificing benevolence and pity towards the needy and perishing children of men. As often as they think of their Lord and Redeemer, they are reminded of his self-denials and sufferings for them, and the whole perishing race to which they belong; and they feel prompted, by every consideration of grateful love, to *follow* Christ in the work of seeking and saving the lost. This fact reveals itself in the hymns and devotional services of the church, everywhere and in all ages; and in all the exhortations which Christians address to each other, in relation to the great duty of laboring to rescue sinful men from their ruined estate of guilt and misery. We get our strongest hold on

the hearts of our brethren, whom we would stir up to new zeal in the missionary cause, when we warmly remind them of what Jesus did as the Prince of missionaries, in his life of humiliation and toils, and in his bitter death for the world's sake. There is that in the very centre of the Christian's new life that will always respond, more or less promptly and strongly, to this appeal. And the desire to be like Christ will ever stimulate a multitude of his followers to repeat and press this appeal to their brethren. We are not to forget the practical place which belongs to this element in the Christian consciousness of the church, in the progress of the missionary work. *We must contemplate and hold up the example of Jesus as a missionary, to keep alive and diffuse and invigorate the missionary spirit.*

What a motive do the disciples of Jesus feel pressing upon their hearts, to lead them to an unfeigned consecration of their property and themselves to the great enterprise of saving this dying world, when they look at their Master's example of voluntary self-denial and humiliation in the same holy cause! And how are the courage and patience of the Christian laborer, both in enlightened and pagan lands, sustained by the memory of the greater trials, and more wearing toils, and heavier sorrows, which Jesus bore in the days of his hard missionary life, when he was depositing the leaven at first in the mass of our fallen humanity! The working disciple would surely grow weary and discouraged, could he not daily look to Jesus, the

author and finisher of his faith. But he can boldly follow where his Lord has gone before him, deeming it a distinguished honor to do and suffer as he did. And there have been those who would rejoice and be exceedingly glad, even when they were called to suffer shame for the name of Jesus. Nay, some would not consent to be crucified without having the head downward, deeming it too great an honor to have the head upward, as the Master's was in his last agonies. The appeal which the example of our blessed Savior makes, to the desire in the hearts of his followers, to be like him in the self-denying exercise of love and mercy towards lost sinners, will never cease to work mightily towards the diffusion of saving influences, until every perishing soul shall be invited and urged to come to the Gospel feast. Let us all, in times of weariness and discouragement, look back and recall to mind the cheerful perseverance and the unflagging zeal of Him, who has shown us how to toil on manfully through dark days, in the face of coldness, opposition and organized wickedness, and in expectation of a most ignominious and terrible death. And let us keep this example of our Lord before the eyes of all his followers; that they may be stimulated to work arduously, as he did, while it is day, in the great cause of human salvation.

I now advance to the thought that the Gospel creates and develops *a sense of universal brotherhood*, which tends to produce and quicken, more and more, the desire that every sinner of Adam's race

may experience the peculiar blessedness of the new life in Christ.

The Bible tells the Christian, on its first page, that all the millions of our race, of every class, color and condition, have proceeded from the creative skill and power of the same God; so as to lay a foundation for the prophet's inquiry, *Have we not all one Father?* Again, it tells him that, in point of historical origin, there is no distinction between the Caucasian, the Tartar, the Malay, the Negro, and the Indian;—that God hath made of *one blood* all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth;—that *every man* is a brother in one great family, all of whose members are children alike of the same first parents. The Bible goes further, and assures the Christian that all these multiplied millions of his brethren, by blood, are born equally heirs to an immortal existence, which ought to be inconceivably blissful and glorious, but may be wretched beyond the reach of human description or thought. Then, also, the Gospel hangs all its offers of mercy on two great facts, which no Christian can lose sight of, and no one can seriously contemplate, without feeling a special sympathy with his fellow-travelers to eternity of every class. The first fact is, that all the children of Adam are alike fallen and condemned sinners. The second is, that the same Savior gave himself *a ransom for all*, and is thus the propitiation, not for the sins of Christians only, *but also for the sins of the whole world*; so that every disciple of Jesus sees, in the same atoning blood in which he trusts for himself, a sufficient

expiation for every dying brother he has on the face of the earth. And then, there is another truth which comes to a special bearing in this connection. The law of God and the Gospel of Christ both *require* us to love our fellow-man, wherever found, as we love ourselves; to love him as our great Father's child of the same blood with us; to love him, as an heir with us of the same immortality; to love him as the purchase of our own Redeemer's blood.

There can be no love to God or to Christ, and, therefore, no scriptural piety, without some real, hearty compliance with this fundamental requirement of God's law and Gospel. Hence the leaven of the kingdom, in any human heart, must always involve this love to all men as brethren,—this sense of special relationship to every sinner of our lost race, and of obligation to care for and try to save him. For this reason the new convert to Christ, as soon as he ventures to hope that his own sins have been forgiven, begins to pray and labor for the conversion of his fellow-sinners. Not only has the great law of love been written on his heart, but he is brought to feel that it has a direct application with respect to his *brethren* by nature and providence. He feels that his own feet have been taken out of the horrible pit and miry clay, and placed on the Rock of Ages, and he begins to pity all those who were his companions in guilt and condemnation, and longs to do something to make them participators of the same liberty and blessedness which he now enjoys. He thinks of each of their

souls as being, like his own, worth more than a thousand worlds like this, and he cannot bear the thought that they should perish forever, when they might all be saved.

This concern for the souls of brethren of a common race, brethren according to the flesh, pervades the whole Church of pardoned sinners, in proportion as the new life is kept fresh and warm in their hearts ; and it constitutes an element in the leaven of the kingdom, which must ever tend to give it diffusion more and more, as the experience of Christians shall continue to grow deeper and broader. When all other means fail to arouse the Church to new activity and zeal in the work of evangelization, it will not be in vain for the earnest friends of the cause to come back again and again to this simple ground of appeal, and say to every sluggish brother and sister in the ranks of the Lord's people, " Remember ! All these thousands and millions, who are living and dying without the Gospel, are of your own blood ! Remember ! Their souls are as precious as yours ; Jesus died for them, as well as for you. Remember ! They are going on rapidly to the same great eternity which lies before you ; and what you do for them, must be done quickly." I tell you, my brethren, we are strong in our cause, when we can press motives like these upon the hearts of all the multitudes, who know how to feel for the woes of perishing souls. There may be outward changes in the condition of the Church, and in the relations of particular methods of labor to the great enterprise of spreading the Gospel ;

but there is an enduring, an unchanging element of power for the diffusion of the leaven, in the fact of common brotherhood with all the race of sinners, which we have to urge upon the attention and the heart of every follower of Jesus, whatever his peculiar name or creed, or outward fellowship. The Gospel clothes this doctrine of our *race-unity* with a divine energy; which will quicken, more and more, the zeal and self-denying activity of Christians, in the work of evangelization, until all the nations shall be gathered into the same spiritual brotherhood, by the operation of a common faith in the same God and Savior. There is no other religion that makes such an appeal to the hearts of its votaries, to stir them up to earnest and untiring efforts for its establishment among the nations. The doctrine (caviled at, but gloriously true) of human unity and equality, in the very centre of our religion, must make it mighty through God; because it turns every convert into an Apostle for the conversion of his brother; and his brother is every sinner in the world.

I find another prophecy and pledge of the Gospel's diffusion and prevalence, in the appeal which it makes to every enlightened conscience *by the authority of special command* on this very subject.

It might seem, at first view, almost needless that any command should be addressed to the disciples of Jesus, to induce them to go and invite all the starving multitudes to come and receive the bread of life. It might be thought that every forgiven

sinner would, of course, make haste to say to all his brethren, "I have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write." And every new convert does feel a strong desire to

" —— Proclaim abroad  
The honors of his Savior, God."

But there are numerous hindrances to keep many silent, who did have it in their hearts to publish the name of Him who has taken away the uncleanness of their leprosy. There is, in one case, the hinderance of constitutional diffidence and self-distrust ; in another case, the hinderance of a lingering fear of self-deception ; in another case, the hinderance of much consciousness of remaining imperfection ; and, in many cases, the hinderance of irresoluteness in the execution of good purposes, already formed and often renewed. Besides, almost every disciple, at times, finds that his first love has become, in a measure, chilled by the cold atmosphere of this sinful world ; and he is tempted to relax his former activity and zeal, even if he have been a devoted servant in his Lord's work. On some occasions, whole churches grow languid in their spiritual life, and their love and gratitude to Christ seem to have 'become, in a great measure, quiescent and inefficacious. For these reasons, it is needful that *divine authority* should come in, to back all the appeals which the Gospel makes to the hearts of believers, by laying its strong grasp on the *conscience* of every slow and irresolute disciple, that he may not feel at *liberty* to become a slothful servant. Especially is this requisite to ensure the

continued prosecution of an enterprise so arduous and protracted, and at times so discouraging, as the conversion of a whole world of sinners, individual by individual. There must, in such a case, be no room left for speculative questions about the *practicability* of the undertaking, so far as the *duty* of persevering labor in the work of evangelization is regarded. Otherwise, considerations of *present expediency* will often prevail over the better devices of the Lord's people, and the great work will cease. The false religions of the world, though some of them may be widely diffused by civil conquest and the merging of nations together, are all destined to have but a restricted prevalence, if for no other reason, because they do not bind the consciences of their adherents by any broad command, as from God, enjoining the *universal* dissemination of their doctrines and principles. In this regard, we find a peculiar element of moral and spiritual power in the provision which our Savior has made to ensure the effectual enlistment of every *Christian conscience* for the spread of his Gospel.

He did not leave his great commission to be *first* promulgated by his *Apostles*, as at second-hand, to the Church. *He* gave it to his disciples from his own lips, and delivered it as his parting charge to the eleven, when he was just on the point of mounting up to heaven on the cloud. And he took care to preface it by a most emphatic and solemn affirmation of his divine authority: "All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth. Go ye, *therefore*, and teach all nations." Thus has

he invested his great command for the evangelization of the nations with a dignity and authority which cannot fail to make an indelible impression on the heart and conscience of every disciple. In this, he makes a double appeal to all of his followers,—an appeal to their consciences by command, and an appeal to their love and gratitude by reminding them that He, who gives the command, is the same Lord and Redeemer who died for them and rose again, and who has gone up into heaven to act there as their ever-living intercessor.

This command is addressed directly, or in effect, to every Christian in the world. If the literal preaching of the Gospel is to be done only by those whom Christ calls to this work by his providence and Spirit, the duty yet rests on the whole Church, of sustaining the ambassadors of Jesus by their prayers, their co-operative labors, and the needful material aid. For the work is one, as the Church and her ministry are one body, having but one Head, and one heart, and one Spirit. Therefore the commission given to the eleven on the mountain of Galilee is the *Church's* commission, and it lays its authority on the conscience of every man and woman and child who knows the way of salvation. And how comprehensive are its terms ! How sweeping its injunction ! “Go ye into *all the world*, and preach the Gospel *to every creature*.” “Go ye, therefore, and teach [make disciples of] *all nations*.” This will hold fast the conscience of the Church, by the grasp of its divine authority, until every creature under heaven shall receive the

Gospel, and all the nations shall have been subdued to the obedience of the faith of Christ.

As if to set a holy seal upon this command, our Savior tells his followers, not only to make disciples of all nations, but to consecrate every one of these disciples to the same glorious Trinity, whom they have themselves acknowledged, by baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Thus every evangelized person is to be solemnly consecrated to the same work of evangelization, to which the first disciples were set apart, and is to be inducted into his work at the hour of his making his Christian profession. In this manner, the great commission spreads its authority over all the newly enlightened consciences that come into the kingdom of Jesus ; and the power of the *command*, as a special element in the diffusion of the Gospel leaven, multiplies itself by a definite law, as the kingdom advances towards its final triumph. I see, in that remarkable commission, a sign and pledge that its grand object and end will in due time be achieved. What a lever does the last command of our risen Lord place in the hands of every friend of the missionary cause ! What a strength does it impart to us in the sublime gathering of disciples here, whither we have come to get our evangelical consciences quickened, and, if possible, to give the claims of this momentous enterprise a new purchase on the consciences of all the Lord's people with whom we especially co-operate ! Let us take the old commission of our Master, and press it with new solemnity of

appeal upon our own consciences and on the consciences of all our brethren: "Go *ye* into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." It is our *Redeemer* who commands; and he must be obeyed, obeyed cheerfully, promptly, and with a courageous heart and a strong hand.

But after all, if there were nothing in our religion to give special stimulus to *the faith and hope* of the Lord's people, in relation to ultimate success in the great work of evangelization, the zeal of the Church would tire and faint after a while, and the chariot-wheels of salvation would drag heavily, or stop altogether. Many would begin to ask, "Why has such an impossible task been assigned to the Savior's disciples? Will not the great majority of the nations perish at last, in spite of all our endeavors to deliver them from their darkness and bondage? Is it worth while to make such sacrifices in an enterprise which gives promise of such small returns?" And the eye of sense could not discern any clear evidence that the latter-day glory would ever dawn upon the world, to reassure the doubting hearts of the weary laborers in this long toil of ages. Hope deferred would make sick the heart of the whole Church, if no divine pledges had been given to stay up her faith, and help her to look beyond the years of tedious preparation and slow progress, to the bright period of final success and triumph. Men may tell us that the *requirement* to preach the Gospel to the world for a witness, is enough, without any sure prospect of converting

the nations. They may tell us that it affords motive sufficient to keep the zeal of the Church alive in this cause; that the glad tidings must be spread everywhere, before Christ shall come the second time, to set up his kingdom by judgment, and mighty miracle. But there is that in the nature of the human mind which makes it needful that men should feel that their work is to be rewarded by the very results towards which it is specially directed, to give them energy and perseverance in the prosecution of it through long periods of duration. They will tire in the labor of sowing, if the conviction becomes settled in their minds, that no harvests are to spring up from the seed which they scatter, but their toils are only necessary antecedents of some mightier agency than theirs, which is in due time to achieve the desired results without their co-operation. There would be, in such a case, a sense of something *arbitrary* and coldly sovereign in the arrangement, which would rapidly subside into a slavish and reluctant, if not an unbelieving spirit. Accordingly, it is found in experience that those churches which are taught to disbelieve in the conversion of the world by the preaching of the Gospel and kindred instrumentalities, do gradually lose their earnestness of devotion to the missionary work. At least, the measure of their practical benevolence, in relation to this enterprise, seems to afford too much warrant for this remark. We do not see the contributions of such churches flowing largely into the Lord's treasury. There is evidently a great element of

evangelical power left out from the faith of those Christians who do not expect that all the nations will be subjugated to the reign of Jesus by the Word and Spirit of God.

There is, therefore, a peculiar practical interest attached to the inquiry, Has God given us any clear warrant for the hope and expectation that the Gospel is to be not only preached everywhere, but believed and obeyed by all the chief kindreds and nations of our fallen race? Is the present work of evangelization to have its issue in *the conversion of the world to Christ?* And we think we find in our inspired Bible a clear and most encouraging answer to this important question. It would be out of time and place for me to attempt here to present, at any length, the scriptural grounds on which rests the common faith of the church touching the universal establishment of our holy religion by the preaching of the Gospel. I can only *refer* to a few leading views of the subject.

(1.) In the Old Testament and the New, the Messiah is habitually represented as the Savior of the world;—as atoning for our race, and as having undertaken to reconcile this revolted province to the divine government. These representations do not imply at all, as some have contended, that the Redeemer was to save, absolutely, every individual of the human family. But they do clearly imply that the work of atonement was designed to open the way for the restoration of our race, as a body, to their appropriate allegiance to God, and that this world is actually to become

the redeemed possession of Christ, as the final result of his humiliation and death in it and for it. On no other construction can we fully justify the declaration, that it was the Father's pleasure to reconcile all things to himself by Christ, whether they be *things on earth*, or things in heaven.

(2.) Then we are told that Christ has broken down the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, *that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross*. What mean such teachings in regard to the great purpose of the Savior's death, if only a small part of the world is to be in fact reconciled to God?

(3.) The light becomes still clearer, when we look at the terms of the great evangelical commission, which we have already considered in its relation to the conscience of the Church. The command is, Go, and *make disciples of all nations*; *baptizing them* into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Can we believe that our Savior would thus *enjoin* it upon his Church to christianize all nations, and baptize them in token of their conversion, while knowing well that no such evangelization of the world was possible, or to be expected? Certainly his command on this subject implies a glorious promise of ultimate success in the work of converting the nations.

(4.) And then we remember, in this connection, the comprehensive *petition* which our Savior has taught us to offer: "Thy kingdom come." This is to be our daily prayer for the full establishment

of that kingdom which cometh not with observation, but silently in the hearts of men, like the diffusion of leaven in the meal. What is this but a prayer for the universal spread of the Gospel, and its complete success in the conversion of all nations ? We cannot help believing that Christ intends to *answer* this petition, which he has put both into our mouths and our hearts.

(5.) But our faith is more fully assured by those numerous and explicit pledges and predictions of the Old Testament and the New, which are so full of encouragement to the minds and hearts of plain readers of the Bible, all over the Christian world. When we connect these pledges and predictions with our Savior's command, that we should evangelize all nations, we find that we have a great sheet-anchor for our faith. The great commission fixes the meaning of those ancient declarations : " All kings shall fall down before him ; all nations shall serve him." " The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters fill the seas." " The kingdom, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High God." " And the Lord shall be king over all the earth, and his name one." Then, when we read in our text, that the leaven of the Gospel shall continue to work in the mass of fallen humanity *until the whole shall be leavened*, what must we believe ? And what are we to understand, when we read that " *the fullness of the Gentiles is to come in*," and then, " *all Israel is to be saved* ;" and this *through*

*that faith in the Gospel*, which cometh by the hearing of the word ? Such are some of the grounds on which we rest our faith and hope, when we look forward through all the discouragements and dark clouds that sometimes hang over the progress of our glorious enterprise, to that surely coming day, when “great voices shall be heard in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.” Nor

(6.) Do we see any scriptural objection to those views, which ought to set them aside or modify them. The interpretations of Scripture which are urged by those who would destroy the faith of the Church in the doctrine of the conversion of the world, all seem to us to be made out rather from a Jewish than a Christian stand-point, and to be encumbered with insuperable difficulties.

We have full confidence that the great body of Christians who read the word with a practical intent, will continue to look and pray and labor for the evangelization of the whole world, by the preaching of the Gospel, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. And we cannot doubt that this faith and hope of the Church, in regard to the final success of our holy enterprise, will still prove, as heretofore, a most operative element of self-diffusion in the spiritual leaven that is so widely at work already in the hearts of sinful men. And the friends of this cause will not cease to minister to the faltering courage of their brethren, in seasons of conflict and difficulty, by pointing them to the sure word of prophecy, to which we

all do well that we take heed, as to a light shining in a dark place. When we cannot prove by our mathematics, or our moral philosophy, that the world is yet to be converted to God, let us strengthen our hearts by remembering *whose word it is* that stands pledged for the birth of a nation in a day, and the chaining of Satan for a thousand years.

Let me now refer for a moment, in close connection with the last topic, to the place which is held *by the divine promise of personal reward to the faithful laborer*, among the efficacious motives that must continually impel the servants of Christ forward in their practical devotion to this great cause.

Love is the *controlling* power. But God always makes the hope of reward an *auxiliary* motive, to quicken the zeal and activity of his people. Moses had respect unto the recompense of the reward ; and even our blessed Savior is said to have endured the cross, despising the shame, *for the joy that was set before him*. On the same principle our Lord teaches all his disciples to expect that every one, who reapeth in the great spiritual harvest, will receive wages unto life eternal ; and that the servant who makes his one pound, or talent for usefulness, five, will at last be set over five cities ; while he who makes his one pound, ten, will be set over ten cities.

The disciple of Christ finds that *in* his present keeping of his Master's commandments there is great reward ; and he is not permitted to forget

that he who watereth others, shall himself be watered ; that thus it is more blessed to give benefits than to receive them. And as often as he feels that his toils are becoming so arduous as to induce weariness, he hears a voice from on high, saying to him, "Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, till he receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient ; stablish your heart ; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." He is encouraged to labor on, in the prospect of a blessed rest near at hand ; to bear poverty and shame, if it must be so, in expectation of riches and glory that will be proportioned to the measure of his self-denials for Jesus' sake.

Thus every earnest worker in the Master's vineyard, alike in Christian and heathen climes, is comforted and stirred to new diligence when his heart begins to faint, and he dreads the trials next before him. He thinks of his promised crown of rejoicing, and then cheerfully toils on. He looks to the unspeakable gladness which is to fill his heart when one after another of those who have been saved directly or indirectly through his instrumentality, shall rise up to heaven, and call him blessed. And at times he thinks of the delight which will swell his bosom, if he shall be permitted to look down from his celestial home upon this theatre of his labors, and see the whole earth covered with the knowledge and glory of the Lord. Nay, his faith anticipates the sublime consummation of the Redeemer's mediatorial reign, and gives him a

foretaste of that everlasting feast of which he is to partake in company with all the countless millions who are to acknowledge him as one of their faithful *co-workers* in the grand and holy enterprise of saving this lost world. The hope of such rewards, stayed up and strengthened by the unfailing promises of Him who cannot lie, "may trials well endure." It anchors the soul of every disciple of Jesus within the veil. It nerves the missionary to constancy and yet higher resoluteness of endeavor. It fortifies the better purposes of every willing subject and servant in the kingdom of Christ on the earth. And it ensures the steady *progress* of the kingdom towards its universal triumph. If the followers of Mohammed could be stimulated to a quenchless zeal and an invincible courage by the hope of a sensual paradise, much more may the followers of Jesus be excited to act their part of daring and irresistible soldiers in his great army, by the prospect of a glorious home in the midst of that holy Paradise, where every face is radiant with light, and every head is crowned with immortal honor.

I find that I must condense, very much, what I have to say respecting several other important points. I hasten to add, that Christianity vitalizes all its other forces for evangelization *by keeping the heart and soul of the Church in close and habitual contact with God, by a special method.*

We know very well that the life of the Lord's people cannot be sustained and kept invigorated

for evangelical labor, without constant personal sympathy and intercourse between them and Him. Without a warm and abiding consciousness that God is in the midst of his Church, and that Christ is with his disciples in their work, the laborers in the great field, both at home and abroad, would speedily grow discouraged, and give up their toils in weariness and despair. But ours is not a religion which chills its votaries, by obliging them to feel that the God they serve is either a cold and distant sovereign, or a vague and shadowy being, devoid of personal presence or affection. On the contrary, it teaches us how we may keep alive, and make more and more operative, our love, faith and hope, so as to practice self-denial, and exercise patience in our long-continued and arduous enterprises, with resolute hearts and strong arms. Every time we contemplate our work of evangelization, in its relations, we remember that it is God's work—CHRIST's work ; that we are carrying out the very same enterprise, which was begun and set in motion by the divine love which sent Jesus down from heaven, and made him obedient unto death in laying the foundations of his gracious kingdom in the world. We are *co-workers with God*. God is in the great outward movement of his churches ; Christ is in it ; the Holy Ghost is in it. We feel that we are thus allied with almighty forces. The omnipotence and the heart of God are with us. And this co-operation with God involves not only his working *at the same time* with our working, but, as it were, the infusion of his agency into

ours,—the investing of our weakness with his glorious power, so as to ensure, without open miracles, an increase from our planting and watering, such as no created causes alone could possibly develop.

Thus, while we are taught to cultivate a sense of our feebleness, we are guilty of no presumption in feeling and declaring that *we are mighty through God*,—that *we can do all things through Christ who doth strengthen us*. And as if to bind our weakness to the strength of God, and perpetuate our sense of personal union with him, so as to quicken more and more our faith and love, it is made the *condition* of our success in the evangelical labors to which we are devoted, that we shall come daily to the throne of grace, in humble, fervent, believing prayer. God tells us, in so many words, that he will be inquired of, by the house of Israel, to do for them the great things which he has promised. And our hearts are affected when we notice that the very first petition, in the memorable prayer which our Savior taught his disciples, is a request for the coming of God's kingdom in the world.

Thus, while we try to fulfill our Lord's commission in the effort to christianize all nations, in co-operation with him, we are encouraged, nay, required, to draw our support and strength from God by fervent pleadings for help and success in our life-long endeavors. And so long as prayer shall continue to be the first duty of Christians, so long will God continue to quicken the spiritual activities of his people, by causing them to feel

that in Him they have everlasting strength. If, then, there is always to be a praying Church, this work of evangelizing the world is to go forward. And if God is true and faithful, there will be a glorious answer to the prayers of his people, in great part through the moral and spiritual influence of the special intercourse which is kept up between him and them, according to his own appointed method. When, therefore, we long to see the springs of life in the missionary work re-invigorated, let us renewedly *call the Church to prayer*, and let us look upward ourselves, and earnestly ask that God will pour out upon his children everywhere the spirit of grace and supplication, according to his own heart-cheering promise.

I can only allude to *the relation which the Christian doctrine of probation sustains to the self-diffusiveness of our religion*. If there were any valid ground for the hope, that the heathen who die without the love of God in their souls might be reached by the offers of mercy, as some contend they will, in the future world, the people of God would be at times strongly tempted to fold their hands and sit down, to wait for the coming of a more auspicious period for sending the bread of life to the perishing millions of our race. But the word of God sheds *no ray of light* on the spiritual prospects of those darkened and depraved multitudes, who are crowding on to eternity in such vast armies, from year to year, and from generation to generation. It tells us that as many as have sinned without law, shall also

perish without law ; it declares that men must call upon the name of the Lord, in order to be saved ; and it puts the question to every Christian's heart, " How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed ? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard ? And how shall they hear without a preacher ? And how shall they preach except they be sent ? "

The great scriptural doctrine that this is the only place of probation to the members of our fallen race, and that those who die out of Christ are lost forever, sets before our minds an awful view of the destiny that awaits the majority of the living generation of our race ; while it presses home an appeal to the sympathies of all who know the value and preciousness of the Christian hope, which must, if any thing can, stir them up *to make haste* and send the word of life to their dying fellow-sinners. It bids us keep in mind that the *time is short* within which there can be anything done to save the six hundred millions of heathen, and the three or four hundred millions of Mohammedans and dead formalists and heartless unbelievers, who are now hastening to the close of their probationary life without any preparation for a happy eternity. And it admonishes us to remember that we ourselves can have, at the most, only a few years to be spent in efforts to rescue the souls of our fellow-heirs of immortality from the woes of the second death. Let this solemn view of the relations of the present life to the next, be placed and kept fully before the minds of God's people,

and they cannot sit down in idleness, while there is any thing for them to do in the work of saving men ; they cannot refuse to cast their contributions freely into the treasury of the Lord, so long as they may hope that every dollar will tell for the deliverance of some perishing soul from darkness and death.

There is no other religion which, like ours, so defines and applies the doctrine of probation as to make it mighty among the forces that are to work the conversion of the nations. Let us make use of this doctrine with due discrimination, but with special earnestness and solemnity, in our endeavors to enlist, for the great cause of evangelization, the prayers and energies and gifts of all who believe the Gospel. And let us not fail to follow the example of Paul, who made himself all things to all men, that *by all means he might save some*. Thus shall we make the true application of our serious faith to this subject, in our generation ; and God will call the attention of his people in the next generation to the same aspects of their responsibility in this probationary world ; and so the work will be urged forward to its glorious consummation.

It is obvious, let me further suggest, that our religion continually operates towards *the practical union of the Church in and with her evangelical work*. The more the disciples of Christ labor to spread the Gospel and plant its institutions in human society, the more do they come to feel *identified*

with the cause to which their prayers and efforts and resources are given. Their most sacred associations soon cluster around the work; and in proportion as the several departments of the enterprise assume definite shapes, they feel more deeply the specific appeals that are made to their hearts by the Macedonian cry. Thus we all feel that we are personally addressed by the calls that come to us through the press of the cherished agency here represented, from our brethren in the several missionary fields; and this in proportion as our *acquaintance* with the progress of the cause becomes more particular and intimate. In this way our practical participation in the enterprise, under our Savior's commission, binds us more and more closely to our holy work. And then we find ourselves more and more drawn into sympathy and fellowship with our brethren, by our consciousness of devotion to the same blessed cause in which they are engaged. We feel ourselves to be united to them by the ties of a *practical* fellowship. And whatever diversities there may be as to modes of labor, the tendency of a common consecration to the great business of converting this perishing world to Jesus, will ever be towards more unity of spirit and co-operation between all the different families of the one church of Christ. And the melting of the church into practical oneness will steadily multiply her moral and spiritual power and efficiency, by commanding her faith to all men, and by giving her that *resistless might* which is ensured by the due combination of forces. There is

no strength acquired by any artificial or mechanical union of forces, that are not in themselves essentially harmonious. But the work of evangelization is adapted to effect a progressive assimilation of *spirit*, and even of *faith*, among those who give themselves earnestly to it. And all the discussions and external appliances in Christendom are not doing as much to bring the Lord's servants to see eye to eye, as their consciousness of consecration to a common work in obedience to the same master. Let this consciousness be deepened and matured by the continuous operation of the same causes by which it is awakened, and the day will come ere long, when all the tribes of Israel will be practically one in their co-operation with the great King in Zion. And then the beams of the latter-day morning will be seen, not only gilding the mountain tops, but scattering away the fogs and clouds far down the mountain sides, and even in the deep valleys and the low plains.

I have now to add a thought in regard to *the mutual influences of the working force, and the progress of the work itself upon each other*, in the expansion of our great enterprise.

We all understand the principle that moral and spiritual power in creatures, like intellectual and muscular energy, is enhanced by continuous exercise. And we can readily see how the progressive identification of the Church with her evangelical work tends to develop and quicken her spiritual life by giving practical exercise to her love, her

faith, her conscience, and her spirit of self-sacrifice. The more she *uses* her piety, the more does it grow, and the more vigorous does she become for efficient service. But scarcely do her membership begin to get their hearts and hands fairly enlisted in the general cause of human salvation, before the fields on all sides are seen whitening for the harvest, and the call for more reapers comes to every disciple, to stir up new interest and zeal among all the Lord's servants, and draw out their prayers and activity towards the great work in such a manner as again to re-invigorate and stimulate their active piety, and so give a new fitness and energy to their working forces. And then these greater working forces are applied again to urge forward the cause with increased rapidity and success. And this process of progressive action and re-action and acceleration of forces will naturally be carried forward, as long as there are sinners to be converted, and God continues to give increase from the planting and watering of his people. Success will still stimulate hope and zeal, and self-denying activity; and these enlarged moral forces will go out again towards their appropriate object, and terminate, as before, in richer and broader successes—thus on, till the world shall be redeemed.

It must add greatly to the momentum of this onward movement by reflexive influences, that personal sympathy and co-operation between the laborers in different fields, of necessity, increase and become more intimate as the cause advances. The Church expands herself as the enterprise of

evangelization achieves new triumphs ; and by the facilities of commercial intercourse which Christianity has enlarged, if not created, there grows up a close Christian communion between the multiplying workers in home and foreign lands. Brothers and sisters, here and abroad, are drawn together by holy bonds, which grow stronger and stronger, year by year. Thus, the reflexive working of brotherly love and conscious co-operation multiply the graces, and enlarge the efficiency of all the laborers alike, in Christian and heathen communities. And I think I see, in this progressive drawing together of hearts in different and distant lands, a sign and pledge of a day when all the nations of the world shall be gathered into one vast and glorious brotherhood. Let the process already fairly commenced go on with no more than an easily credible acceleration in its ratio of increase, and a common love of Jesus and his kingdom will surely leave the entire mass of human society, from the eternal snows of the Arctics to the land of ever-blooming summer—from the rising to the setting of the sun.

I wish I had time to expand one other remark, which I can only offer in the form of a mere hint or intimation ; but which I desire to commend to the attention of thoughtful minds. I seem to read a distinct promise of an ultimate melting together of evangelical influences throughout the world, *in the peculiar adaptation of the Gospel to meet the minds of all the nations that have been trained under the various religious systems which now hold sway over the unevangelized millions of our race.*

I have already referred to the fitness of the Gospel to meet the common wants of man, as a moral being and as a sinner. Let me now suggest, that there has been a providential preparation for the efficacy of the Gospel in the development of the various religions that have grown up during the lapse of ages in different parts of the earth. Christianity embraces precisely those elements that are needed to commend it to the consciences and hearts of the nations of the world, when they shall come to understand its nature, and learn to discriminate between the true and the false elements of the religious systems which they now acknowledge.

The genuine Judaism of the Old Testament was God's schoolmaster, to bring those who were trained under it, to Christ. It taught the doctrine of one personal God, the King and head of the universe, a holy, just and merciful being. But it answered the question, 'How may a man be just with God?' only by shadows and promises, which seemed enigmatical to all minds. And it brought God's love home to the hearts of men as almost subordinate to his sovereignty and omnipotence. But the Messiah came and brought God, as a Father and Friend, down to the apprehensions of sinful and troubled souls; and made plain the way of pardon and peace to the awakened and inquiring spirit.

But, after all, the experiment of secularizing a really spiritual religion had not been sufficiently carried out to convince the Jewish nation, as a body, that they could never realize the promised reign of their predicted Messiah, according to their carnal

hopes. And, therefore, the mass of them did not recognize their King when he appeared, and are still blinded. But the Gospel found a providential preparation for its efficacious introduction, in the minds of the heathen nations that held the chief sceptres of the world, when the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles was broken down. The Persian, with his doctrine of a terrible kingdom of evil and darkness over against a kingdom of light, could find a power of attraction in the teachings of Christianity regarding God and Satan and subordinate good and evil spirits. The Greek, with his belief in a God of light, who sustains a fatherly relation to men as his offspring, was groping after an unknown deity, and inquiring for a perfection in man which he could think of only as united with divinity. And the Gospel met his yearnings by telling him of God the Father, as revealed in the person of Jesus, the perfect son of man, the truly divine Son of God. The Gospel found the Egyptian inquiring after his hidden God, Ammon, and trying to look through a multitude of mysterious symbols into the depths of divine truth ; and it declared to him the true substance of all the shadows and symbols of nature and providence and ancient revelation. The Roman was full of the idea of sovereignty and law in a single empire, under one head. And Christianity came to him, demanding that his human emperor should bow to the superior lordship of Jesus, the one King of kings, and Head over all things to the Church. And the same proclamation of one divine kingdom,

with Christ as its glorious Lord, made its efficacious appeal to the rude Goths, those worshipers of a wrestling and conquering God, who were struggling wildly for victory over all opposing powers, on land and sea.\* Thus the kingdom of heaven availed itself of a great characteristic element in each of the religions with which it came into contact, up to the day of its undisputed ascendancy in western Asia, northern Africa, and southern and middle Europe.

But converted nations are slow to escape from all their long-cherished errors, and get hold of a pure religion, without overlaying it with any of their old superstitions, or favorite principles or policies. The Persian dualism proved too strong for large portions of the Christian Church, and leavened them with the Gnostic heresy. The Greek philosophies insidiously crept into the theological systems of Alexandria, Ephesus and Constantinople. The symbolism of the Jewish, the Egyptian, and other systems, stole unnoticed into the Church and perverted the simplicity and purity of her spiritual worship. And at last the passion of the Roman for imperial sovereignty in the State, asserted for itself a lordly sway over the Church, in the exaltation of a man as the vicar of God, where the Cæsars had held their sceptres and thrones. A long and mournful experiment, under corrupted Christianity, was thus entered upon, which must teach its necessary lessons to the Church and the world by a schooling process of ages, before the way would be prepared for a final and secure

\* See Maurice's *Religions of the World*.

return to the unadulterated word of God. The Mohammedan delusion was suffered to spring up, to offset and counteract the dualism of the East, and reassert the doctrine of one supreme God, against Gnosticism and the idolatrous corruptions of Greek and Roman Christianity.

At length the reformation of the sixteenth century broke forth in Middle Europe, and disinterred the long buried doctrines of salvation by grace alone. But after it had partially redeemed from spiritual despotism the major portion of Western Europe and Great Britain, it still left in the Protestant churches too many remnants of antiquated error, to afford any well-founded hope that the world would be converted by the purest type of Christianity, which was represented as yet among the reformed communities. God, in his wise providence, left his people to suffer persecution from their fellow-Christians, and be driven to find a new home for their faith in a land where they might build up the institutions of the Gospel without special entanglement with the established associations, and perverted usages, and stereotyped errors of the old world. Meanwhile an infidelity, sometimes bold and daring, sometimes insidious, sprang by reaction from the abuses and corruptions of the churches of Europe, and spread itself abroad not only on the continent, but in Great Britain, and even in this western home of exiled Christians. And this unbelief was commissioned by divine Providence to drive Christian teachers, both in Europe and America, to a more careful scrutiny of their theological systems, and oblige them to eliminate from their religion the

indefensible and pernicious elements which still remained incorporated with the truer and better elements of their faith. Thus by stern trials many Protestant churches were largely purified, and prepared to undertake anew the grand enterprise of sending the Gospel, without admixture of serious error, to every creature. But yet there remained, in the purest and most working communions of the Lord's people, much of imperfection in point of doctrinal belief, and more as to living and well-developed piety. The missionaries of the cross have been sent forth into most of the great countries of the heathen world; and large results have been achieved.

But our Christianity is not yet found to be *many-sided* and practical enough to commend it fully to the various nations whose religions it seeks to supplant. It operates slowly in India, in the Burman empire, in China, and even in Persia; while it works its way more hopefully in Turkey and Syria. Will not the repulses which it sustains, among the different nations of heathen and Mohammedan countries, at length teach us all where lie the defects in our doctrinal schemes, and in the prevailing type of our piety, and lead us to correct our errors on all sides, and come up, as individuals and churches, to a purer and more apostolical style of spiritual life and activity? And when we shall learn, from the mistakes of the Church in past ages, and from the ill success of our religion as we now hold it, among the various heathen nations, where our faith and practice need amendment, to make it most truly operative, shall we not get back at last

into the footsteps of the Apostles, and be able to apply the very truths which they declared, with an unexampled and irresistible power?

We shall come nearer and nearer to the primitive standard, in our doctrine and spiritual life, until our religion, as we teach and exemplify it, will become worthy of acceptation, and the nations will be made to see that it is just what they have been feeling after through so many long ages. The Mohammedans will then gradually come to see that our Gospel recognizes the same authority and supremacy of one God for which he has fought so long, while it teaches him to receive from Christ and exercise and conquer by that holy love, which his own system never infused into his restless heart. The Hindoo will at length perceive that the pure light of Brahm, the incarnations of his divinities, and the offerings of his whole sacrificial system, embrace only so much of truth as the Gospel most clearly teaches him in its revelation of the one personal God, the incarnate and atoning Son of God, and the unfolding of a divine *heart* to reach and melt the cold and despairing heart of man. The Buddhist will discover, in the light of the Gospel, the very truths which he has been for ages grasping after, with a sense of disappointment, as if the substance which at times he had almost attained, still turned to shadow when he approached it. He will detect in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, as God imparted to good men, in distinct outline, the old idea which had glimmered before his mind regarding a divine spirit in humanity at large. And he will see, in the union of the Holy Spirit

with the man Christ, the realization of the hazy conception which he has sought to embody in the person of the grand Lama, whom he now adores as possessing the pure spirit of divinity in humanity.

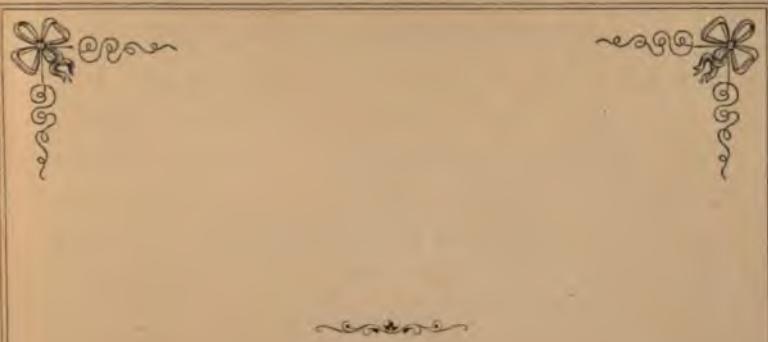
Will not the prejudices of the three hundred and fifty millions of Buddhists, and the one hundred and fifty millions of Hindoos, and the one hundred and forty millions of Mohammedans, after a season melt away, until they shall be enabled to discriminate between the true and the false in their own systems, and rally by mighty hosts around the standard of the cross, because they will find in the Gospel all the positive truths in their old systems, which so long bound their consciences, while they will get possession of the other elements, which their religions could not supply, to satisfy the warm yearnings of their souls? Then will not the infidel become ashamed to reject a religion, which so proves itself adapted to the moral nature of man, and fitted to be the one uniting religion of the world? And will not even the Jew, after his many centuries of wandering, seeing that his Messiah does not come, and witnessing the conquests of the cross, pause in his resolute career of unbelief, and consent to be grafted again by faith into his original olive stock? Need there be one miracle to achieve these sublime results? When the leaven shall spread in the mass from a multitude of centres, may it not meet and become universally diffused, before the Church can summon faith enough to expect so speedy an answer to her long continued prayers? Let the tide of public senti-

ment and of predominating influences among all the *leading* nations of the world once begin to set strongly towards the kingdom of Jesus, and the Gospel will hasten to its predicted triumph with a rapidity of conquest that will amaze the most sanguine among the Savior's followers.

We, Fathers and Brethren, may not live to see the glorious consummation ; for moral causes move slowly in their preparatory working, beneath the surface of human life. But the day at last comes for the outward and visible development of their sure results. The waters are gradually accumulated that press against the strong barricades, which resist their flow as they seek to mingle in a common tide. But at length they acquire weight and momentum enough to burst through all opposing obstructions, and suddenly they sweep with a resistless torrent over all the plains below. The waters of Christian influence have been hedged up and restrained at a thousand different central points. But the day is drawing on when they will break through all their restrictions, and spread abroad, in one glorious flood of grace and salvation, all over the earth. The faith and hope and prayerfulness and self-denying spirit of the Church, in her various communions, are flowing more and more into the apostolic and primitive channels. And God is more and more pouring out his Spirit in connection with the progressive purification and invigoration of the Church's doctrine and life. The heathen nations are coming into closer intercourse and acquaintance with the Christian nations. The consciousness of weakness in the old religions of the East is grow-

ing deeper in the Mohammedan, and the whole Asiatic mind. And providential events are breaking down old walls of hinderance and opening to the interior of all the chief territories of the world for the admission of light and hope and salvation. Meanwhile, the reflexive influence of the missionary work continues to be felt as a power to save our evangelized communities from the progressive corruption of a stagnant Christianity, and to quicken the aggressive forces of the Church for wider conquests abroad.

I have faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ as a fit instrument to be used, by the Spirit of God, in effecting its diffusion and leavening the entire mass of human society. We all have faith in it. But we all believe that it is to work to its sublime results in and through the intelligent and responsible freedom of the Lord's people. And, therefore, we are here on this great occasion. This convocation demonstrates the vitalizing nature of our religion. It is itself a stimulating prophecy of the world's conversion to Christ. I see deep shadows yet on the landscape we are contemplating. But the light gathers its beams more and more on the scene. The watchmen call us to prayer and more resolute and self-sacrificing labors, and then silvery voices are beginning to blend gratefully in the glad announcement, **THE MORNING COMETH**. Let us work on, not as those who have no hope, but with the constancy of a *settled expectation*, and with the vigor of a life that draws its forces from a divine and never-failing source.



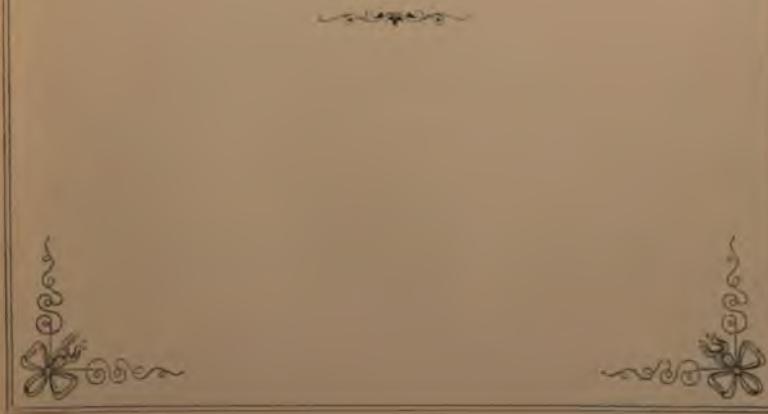
REV. DR. FISHER'S SERMON

BEFORE THE

American Board of Commissioners  
for Foreign Missions,

PREACHED AT BOSTON,

OCTOBER 2, 1860.





God's Purpose in Planting the American Church.

(15)

A

# S E R M O N ,

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR

## FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AT THE

MEETING IN BOSTON, MASS.

OCTOBER 2, 1860.

---

BY SAMUEL W. FISHER, D. D.

President of Hamilton College.

---

BOSTON:

PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN & SON, 42 CONGRESS ST.

1860.

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

---

BOSTON, Ms., OCTOBER, 1860.

*Resolved*, That the thanks of the Board be presented to the Rev. Dr. FISHER for his Sermon, preached on Tuesday evening, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.

Attest,

SAMUEL M. WORCESTER, *Rec. Secretary.*

## S E R M O N .

---

ISAIAH xlv. 1-6.—xliii. 21.

THUS saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is none else.

This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.

IT is an obvious fact that, for the enlargement of his church, God often selects special instruments. In setting into motion a whole system of agencies, this is almost uniformly the case. We recognize the fact all along the history of the church. We see men raised up with peculiar gifts, and clothed with peculiar powers, to effect certain great works. The text gives us a remarkable illustration of this method of divine procedure. Cyrus was a heathen; but there was that in his character, training and circumstances, that pre-eminently fitted him for the special work he was to perform as the restorer of the church. His magnanimity, his love of

justice, his respect for religion according to his light, the fact that he belonged to neither of the races that had done most to crush out the life of God's chosen people, but was himself their conqueror, qualified him for the work to which God had anointed him.

In the bosom of the church itself there are two still more remarkable examples of this law; the two men who bore the largest part in the inauguration and establishment of the chief dispensations. Moses and Paul were not indifferent characters; nor were their training and position like that of the multitude. They stand out boldly in history as men of peculiar natural gifts and attainments. Their early discipline exalted their intrinsic power; while their relation to the people among whom their work was to be performed, and to the science of the age in which they lived, imparted special qualifications for their great mission. It was not merely the fact that divine grace had consecrated them, that made them all they were. Back of their conversion, the providence of God, never, like man, neglectful of the minor things of life, had chosen, guided, disciplined and trained them in respect to those qualifications which belonged to them rather as men than as prophets and apostles. There is here a completeness, a symmetry of character and position wonderfully characteristic of the divine agency. Nor in all this do we see anything derogatory to the divine Word, or the divine Spirit. These are indeed *vital* to the progress of the church. It is their prerogative to give strength to weakness, courage to timidity, and,

with the worm that man treads upon, to thresh down the mountains of human pride and power. Beside these, all things else are as weakness. But if, when exalting these, we practically affirm the uselessness of all things else, we shall betray an ignorance of the method of Providence in the conversion of men only less great than that shown by its opposite error. It is not that the human is thus exalted above the divine, but simply that the divine uses that kind and measure of humanity which are best fitted to accomplish its purposes. It is nothing more than that common law which in all things else God has established ; the law of means adapted to ends, from which in the natural world we ascend to the idea of his wisdom ; the law which makes a sharp sword cut better than one that is dull ; which makes a wedge split the gnarled oak, when a blunt surface would only bruise it ; which hollows the bones of a bird and gives its wings their force and working, in order easily to rise on the elastic air ; which makes a word spoken in one manner, better fitted to move the soul than the same word spoken in a different manner ; it is this law exalted into the supernatural which God uses in his nobler work of leading his church onward to conquest. Just as he chose the passionate, magnanimous, courageous Luther to tear down the vast structure of Romish superstition ; just as he chose the acute, constructive Calvin to make and build up, out of the chaos of scholastic theology, the glorious temple of Christian science ; just as he chose the impassioned Whitfield to breathe new life into a dying church,

just so he works all through the world and the church, subsidizing the natural gifts and powers of his own creation, to bring forth the elevation of the race into the light of his glorious gospel. This is the first lesson I derive from the passages before us.

The second is but an expansion of the first. It is just as certain that the great Sovereign chooses *particular nations* to effect certain parts of his work in the final triumph of the gospel, as that he chooses certain *individuals* for some special operation. "*This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.*" We place the emphasis here on the fact that he has *formed* this people for himself. He may not select as his agent this or that nation indifferently. His sovereignty reaches back of the immediate work. It chooses according to the character of the nation; it reaches to the antecedent training and the natural characteristics which combine to prepare the nation most fully for the work; nay, this sovereignty in its far-reaching wisdom has been busy all along the history of the people in so ordering the moulding influences under which character and position are attained, that when the time comes for them to enter into his special work, they will be found all ripe for his purpose.

This nation, to whom the passage before us refers, is a marked illustration of this thought. The Jew was designed to be the *conservator* of the word of God. He was chosen for this purpose. The object was not propagation, but conservation. The race, by nature and education, had just those

qualities which fitted it for this work. Its wonderful tenacity of impression, its power to hold what once had fairly been forced into it by divine energy, like the rock hardened around the crystal, belongs to its nature, reveals itself after Providence had shattered the nation, in that granite character which, under the fire of eighteen centuries, remains unchanged. It was its mission to hold, not to give ; to stand, not to advance ; and it was not until a mind of large Grecian culture was chosen to bear the truth to the Gentiles—not until the men of another race and another style of thought had received it, that the gospel went forth to win its grandest triumphs.

At every step of the progress of Christianity since, illustrations multiply of the truth contained in our text, that God forms nations to his work, and chooses them because of their fitness to accomplish certain parts of that work. I need not dwell upon the Greek, with his high mental culture and his glorious language—fit instrument through which the Divine Word breathed his life-giving truth ; upon the Roman, sceptred in power over the whole realm of civilization, and undesignedly constructing the great highway for the church of Jesus ; upon the German, with his innate freedom of spirit, nourishing the thoughtful souls whose lofty utterances awoke, whose wondrous power disenthralled a sleeping and captive church.

Passing by these and other illustrations of the truth before us, rich though they be in thoughts full of instruction, I deem no apology necessary for engaging in the inquiry, as to what work in

the cause of evangelization God has been forming *this* nation to accomplish. This unusual occasion —this gathering of representative Christians from all parts of our country, to celebrate the close of our first half-century of special missionary activity, is amply sufficient to justify me in turning from the general discussion of the theme before us, to a special application of it to our own time and nation. We stand this day on an eminence from which it needs no prophet to discern the rapidly converging lines of God's providence, or indicate the point of light towards which they hasten. Twenty-five years ago, this would have been difficult; fifty years ago, it would have been impossible. Trains of influence that once demanded centuries for their development, unfold and open in the life of a single generation. All over our brief history, impressed on every page of it, God has revealed a great purpose to be accomplished by this nation. The object for which he has been forming us is no longer hidden in the darkness of the future; it stands forth more clearly than did his great purpose in respect to Israel, when Solomon dedicated his temple, and for nearly a thousand years that purpose had been ripening.

In speaking to you on this subject, it will not be in my power to do even partial justice to it, without including some things that belong to the great nation out of which have flowed the main currents of our national life. Other nations have contributed some of the finest influences that have moulded us; our position has modified our character; but the vitality, the commanding energy

that has given birth to such great results, is directly traceable to the Anglo-Saxon. That wonderful race moves forward step by step with us in this work of evangelizing the world. The half century which has done so much in developing our missionary activity, has produced results scarcely less remarkable in the nation that planted us here. The nation which has brought forth Whitfield, and Wesley, and Wilberforce, and Newton, and Cary, and Morrison, and Williams, and hundreds like them, has done vastly more for us than all the world besides. We glory in this filial relationship, not because it allies to earthly greatness, but to the piety which, clothed in the radiant panoply of a consecrated learning, has entered, with unconquerable zeal, into the work of preaching the gospel to every creature.

To this point, therefore, let us direct our attention; let us trace out some of those things which indicate *that God has formed us as a nation to exert a special and vast influence in the evangelization of other nations.*

I. If you look at the natural constitution of this race, you will see in it an admirable fitness for this work. The character of a nation's influence is in part grounded in its natural constitution. The Anglo-Saxon inheriting, in common with the Northern races, strong intellectual powers, conjoins with these a hardy, persistent, energetic nature. The child of the temperate zone, the very extremes of temperature to which it is exposed impart vigor, elasticity, restless energy to its temperament. It

stands midway between the phlegmatic and the passionate—between the races so cold as rarely ever to be roused to great attainments, and the hot blood which, like the torrents raised by the summer shower, is stirred by slight causes, and then as quickly sinks into lethargy. It has the constitution which bears up under the severest toils of body and mind; it conjoins with this an energy springing from the fullness of natural vigor, that delights in action and perpetually impels to progress. The clear, practical understanding, laying its plans far in the future, the courage that danger cannot daunt, the fortitude that counts suffering a triumph, the persistent energy which works on in the eye of despair, find their most splendid and numerous illustrations in the history of this race. These are the native qualities which fit it for conquest; these prepare it not only to conquer, but to possess, not only to acquire, but to hold; these enable it to make one advance the stepping-stone for another, to wring out of the barrenness of nature rich tribute, to coin the gold of a triumphant civilization out of the granite, and through pathless snows,\* or the bloody welcome of savage foes, win freedom, plenty and peace.

This race thus constituted, while it takes from others only what is in harmony with its nature, gives vastly more than it receives. The multitudes, that from other races unite with it, are quickly subdued by its all-controlling energy; their prejudices, their habits, their language vanish; the forms of their religion change; a spirit, silent, all-embracing, like the warm breath of spring upon

the snows of winter, dissolves their stubborn nationalities and mingles them as homogeneous elements in its own rich life.

A race like this is formed of God to be a vast power for good in this world. He combined in it the finest qualities of half a dozen nations, that it might impress itself upon others; that its laws, its knowledge, its spiritual life might become quickening forces among the dead millions. Not for itself, not for any merely temporal object has he created it; but to diffuse the truth, to be a plastic power among the nations, in the hand of Jesus, in hastening his final triumph.

II. Let us look now at the peculiar training which God has given to this race—a training all in harmony with this great object. With the same original qualities, education—especially an education working in the same direction for centuries—makes a vast difference. In one direction it may restrain, repress, modify, almost annihilate the primary tendencies of a nation; but when it falls in with those tendencies, its effect is to enlarge and stimulate them. Now just as the education of Cyrus and Moses and Paul gave them a special preparation for their missions towards and in the church—just as the peculiar and protracted discipline of the Hebrew fitted him to be the conservator of the truth until Messiah should come—just so the divine Providence has given scope and stimulus to the original endowments of the Anglo-Saxon and American, fitting him for the offensive work of missions among the nations.

His home was on that little Isle of a few thousand square miles, scarce surpassing in extent one of our larger States. He was girt about by no impassable mountains, by no overcrowded populations. The sea—the open, the boundless, the free—mingled the music of its surges with the harvest-song of its reapers, and the anthems of his Sabbath worship. Each creek, each bay nourished the adventurous spirit of his sons. The boy who rode his skiff over the ripples of its quiet waters, in imagination was the captain of the merchantman, the admiral of the fleet. And so, from the necessities of the case, and the inward energy of his soul, the sea became his home, the sailor his representative. Gradually commerce grew into ever enlarging proportions. His ships traversed all oceans, visited all shores; round and through the world they carried the spirit and the power of the little Isle. They became the carriers for all nations, gathering peaceful tribute from all peoples, spreading their victorious enterprise over climes inhospitable with eternal ice or sweltering in the hot luxuriance of the tropics.

From this adventurous spirit three results followed; each great in itself, and all combining to develop this power of positive impression. The first was reflexive; this people, who could thus take, must also give. Hence sprang up the artisan; manufactories rose on all sides; villages of yesterday swelled into vast cities, crowded with earnest workers. The Island became a work-shop for the world; a work-shop not of dumb-driven cattle, but of high intelligence, of bold, far-reaching, practical science. The Anglo-Saxon must not re-

ceive tribute as a lazy lord, but as an intelligent, high-minded worker, to return it a hundred fold. And so the enterprise of commerce, and the enterprise of domestic industry, mutually stimulated each other ; and both, under the conduct of consummate tact and prudence, influenced not a little by the quickening spirit of a revived Christianity, gave birth to powers and influence unexampled in the known past.

Associated with this was a second grand result. Undesigned on his part, seeking at first only a field whereon his peaceful energies could develop themselves, this Anglo-Saxon seats himself upon what was once the richest throne of the past.

India, to which he went as a tradesman, becomes his vassal. The sceptre of Aurungzebe passed into his hands. This sceptre, though again and again dipped in blood ; this throne, though often shaken by the volcanic throes of religious fanaticism, is his to-day. God sent him there and keeps him there for a glorious purpose. As Cyrus dreamed not that he was conquering Babylon for the deliverance of Israel, so this nation imagined not that India was given to it yet to be set as a crown jewel in the casket of Jesus. Through this process of blended commerce and conquest the energies have been developed which fit it to impress its spirit and its laws, and in the end, a pure Christianity upon the dead millions of the East.

But in addition to these there is a third result of this education of the Anglo-Saxon which bears more directly upon us in this our half-century gathering —a result which, more than all the others, has

reacted on the race, fitting it to be God's chosen instrument for the evangelization of the world. This spirit peopled this continent. We were born not of the inward pressure of an over-crowded population which forced Greece to colonize ; not of the lust of empire which led Rome to plant colonies to secure her conquests ; not of the lust of gold which led the Spaniard to enthrone himself in Central America. We had a unique, a noble origin. The spirit of enterprise was interpenetrated by the spirit of vital Christianity ; it was guided by the practical wisdom, which sought here to create the home of a free, God-fearing people. This spot on which to-night we gather ; these waters where pilgrim barks floated ; these hills and intervalles which heard their calm, confident supplications amidst terror and death, and their anthems of thanksgiving in the hour of deliverance, are the mute witnesses of that living faith and stern resolve and high emprise which gave us birth.

No sooner is the Anglo-Saxon here, than the original conditions under which he has been in training are either changed or enlarged. The land has a broader margin of ocean, the lochs expand into inland seas, the rivulets swell to rivers, the little island home has become a continent. The education of the race for its work advances in this wide, free land, with increasing power, but substantially in the same direction. It is not in mere art that embellishes life ; it is not in the finer works that concentrate the powers while they limit their range, that the American is to win his most remarkable triumphs. He is not to follow in the

old, effete methods of thought and life. His is a nobler destiny ; and for him there must be another style of education. He is not to paint miniatures, and sculpture men in marble and brass ; he is to *form* men, to give laws to nations and interpenetrate the souls of millions with the truth as it is in Jesus. To fit him for this work, his *individuality* must be developed ; the forces that give power and influence must be quickened within him ; he must possess self-reliance and sturdy independence. The spirit that made him forget the glad hearths of England, must ripen under these ever-changing skies. His work is not to conquer millions for a despot, but to unfold the energies of his race along the line of individual achievement in the peaceful pursuits of a thoroughly Christian civilization. And so the ocean, the forest, the lake, the prairie, welcome him to their stern toils. A virgin continent lies before him, to be subdued and made the home of Anglo-Saxon institutions— institutions so modified and reorganized as to be truly American. In this great work no slaggard, no slave can triumph. On this field all the higher, stronger qualities of the race will be tasked. This ocean must be ploughed with swift ships ; these rivers must bear the burden of a new world's productions ; these forests must let in the sun ; these prairies must echo to the rattle of the swift reaper and the glad shout of the harvest-home ; these plains and valleys must shake beneath the wheels of his iron chariots, and over them thought shall fly on the wing of the lightning ; these rocky ramparts, that frown him back from the unknown

Pacific, must be scaled. Onward in the march of peaceful conquest he must press, until the handful of corn planted on the shores of the Atlantic, shall ascend all mountain-tops ; and every where, from ocean to ocean, and from the ice-mountains of Hudson's Bay to the warm waters of the Gulf, its fruit shall shake like Lebanon.

Now in this process of national culture, you see the development of just those qualities which, when consecrated by the spirit of the gospel, are to constitute the finest missionary race in the world. They are positive qualities ; they constitute the energy that impresses—the power that subdues and moulds other minds by a law as certain as that which bids the flowers open, and verdure crown the hills beneath the kiss of the sunshine and the rain. This hardy frame ; this restless energy ; this indomitable perseverance ; this practical tact ; this productive invention, not spending itself on minute forms of embellishment, but exerting its genius along the line of those practical combinations which multiply the power of the hand a thousand-fold, and change, as if by magic, the aspect of a country in a single year ; this stalwart growth of individual power which makes man the sovereign of nature ;—these constitute a race which, informed by religion, is prepared, yea necessitated, to lead the van of Immanuel's army for the conquest of the world.

III. Intimately connected with, and constituting part of the method in which God is forming this people for the aggressive work of missions, are

that individual freedom and the settlement of governmental difficulties and constitutional principles which have given such a peculiar form to our civilization. One fact, not always recognized, but yet of vast significance, meets us whenever we attempt to understand the original forces that have made us what we are. The "Common Law" is our inheritance. It grew up out of the necessities of individuals and small communities. It was the child of those common rights which naturally belong to freemen associated in civil society. No man, therefore, can tell when or where it was born. History recognizes its existence, never its origin. The sense of justice, the dignity and personality of the individual, the practical understanding of those relations of life which society creates, the barriers reared against the concentration of power in single hands to the injury of the many, the facilities for the determination of the right,—these reveal themselves as its vital characteristics. This is not the place to run a comparison between the Civil and the Common Law—to show how one has assisted to consolidate the great monarchies, while the other has wrought to limit and fetter irresponsible power. It is sufficient here to remark, that the principles of the latter, harmonizing with a revived Christianity, have wrought with great power both in this and in the land from which we sprung. They wrested Magna Charta from King John; they fought with the encroachments of absolute power, reign after reign, until their ascendancy was fully established through the great Revolution. Transplanted to this new world, this British oak has

sent its roots into our rich alluvial, has lifted its branches broader and freer into the heavens. Here its limbs have shot forth in peculiar vigor and beauty. Individual freedom; representation causing the power to ascend from the masses and return again to wait their decision; written, limited constitutions, with all the checks upon hasty legislation and central consolidation which can be created by a systematic division of the powers of government,—these are the consummate flower and glory of our civilization.

Now you are to mark this thing in this connection. These great results have been reached through protracted struggles. They are not the sudden achievement of a race, all at once casting off the disabilities and burdens of absolute power. They are the outgrowth of centuries. The blood of martyrs; the tears and prayers of confessors; revolutions now peaceful, now sanguinary, now moving forward under the impulse of deep religious conviction, then struggling into life as the result of the native love of freedom; reforms, experiments, crises and eras of vast significance, succeeding each other for nearly two centuries, have consecrated, watered and developed these principles. It is the long process through which a race has been unfolding the noblest energies of humanity. The stern, the strong, the earnest elements of manhood have been most fully nourished. The characteristics that prepare men to impress others, the stimulant, commanding, effective energies, the clear conception of right, the sense of individual worth, loyalty to law rather than persons,

the power and the purpose to choose each his own field of action, the right to do and attain in any direction whatever talent, and industry, and honesty can effect ; forces, ideas—habits such as these, have been the product of this peculiar education of the Anglo-American. It is not the refinement of courts, the artificial manners of subjects in presence of superiors, that makes men. The high conception of individual right and duty ; the habit of yielding obedience to conscience rather than arbitrary power ; the felt assurance of liberty to develop the energies of the soul in all directions,—these give birth to a race mighty for good ; these won the revolution that ripened its fruit in 1688 ; these planted our continent ; these wrought out our liberties ; these, under the guiding spirit of the gospel and the sovereignty of King Jesus, form a people prepared to traverse all oceans, ascend all mountains, penetrate all forests, face all dangers in the work of impressing this gospel upon the world. And it is in view of just such qualities as these, we see the design of God to make us a missionary race, just as clearly as we see that design in the education of Cyrus, or Luther, as the deliverers of his people and the builders of the broken walls of Zion.

There is one advance we have made upon the Common Law as it exists in most parts of the Father Land, which has a peculiar significance in reference to our future as a missionary race. I refer to the abolition of the law of primogeniture. In a nation like that of Israel, constituted to conserve things as they were until Messiah should come, this law was in place. But when God would

prepare a race to give, to advance, to impress its ideas upon the world, to go forth on the peaceful conquests of the Cross, then it must fall. One of the effects of the pentecostal spirit was the selling of their property and the consecration of it to Christ. It is not for such a people to build palaces, to found great families, to perpetuate the distinctions of birth, to gather vast estates in few hands, around whose possessors the multitude must revolve for generations as dependents and satellites. This race, that is to put the lever of the gospel under the old world, must stand not upon the dead past, but upon the living present. High moral worth, associated with individual energy and independence, must be its title to this distinction. It must have a life of its own, and create its own possessions. It must be renewed every generation by the subsidence of the effete into their original nothingness, and the rise of new, fresh, vigorous manhood into all places of responsibility and power. If this Anglo-American, chosen of God for a higher purpose, in the petty pride of successful accumulation, builds him a palace, he shall do it knowing that no long succession of his sons shall inhabit it.

I know we have been reproached for the facility with which our children leave the old homestead to seek new abodes. But this is God's ordinance for this nation—one of the means by which he trains us to leave father and mother, for the advance of higher interests. I deny not the value and the preciousness of the associations of home. We run back to those early memories which wreath themselves around the place where our childhood was

nurtured, with ever fresh delight. The venerable forms that watched our opening youth, the dear associates that lent so bright a glory to life's young dream, the dwelling consecrated in every part by scenes of joy, the trees we climbed, the grounds that echoed to the joyful shout and quick tread of our playmates,—these never rise before us, gilded with brilliant hues by our warm imagination, without awakening a thrill of joy. But when it is a question whether we shall preserve the material part around which these associations cluster, at the cost of sterility and dependence, or whether we shall pass from it to create new homes, to develop manhood and womanhood in new fields of action, then, we say, let the dead past bury its dead; then we rejoice in the necessity which compels us to go forth and lay the foundations of a new home; we bless God that this Anglo-American is forced to live as a stranger and a pilgrim, since this is the very process by which our sons and daughters can be best trained to count the world their field of labor, and the spot where, in obedience to the call of Jesus, they may pitch their tent for a few years, their home in time. What matters it to the men and women of such a people, when their hearts feel the quickening power of Christ's spirit, whether their bones lie beneath the deep shade of our western forests, on the sad shores of Africa, or on those Pacific isles where the swelling ocean ever sings their requiem? What matter is it to us whether, like Harriet Newell, and Smith, and Scudder, and hundreds of others, these bodies sleep their last sleep on a foreign shore, or whether they be borne,

by kindred hands, to their resting place in Auburn, and Greenwood, and Spring Grove ? God educates us to leave the paternal roof for distant homes ; and it needs but the living spirit of Him who said, 'Go preach my gospel to every creature,' to make this peculiar training effective in raising a great army of missionaries of the Cross.

IV. Let us advance now to another thought. The providence which has thus been training us, has given us large material possessions, and the power to develop and use them. In the material elements of national wealth, coal, iron, the precious metals, and a soil of great variety and richness, no country surpasses this. In productive power and inventive genius, this nation, by the confession of the ablest foreign writers, has no superior. With such a country, and such a power to develop its resources, what is to hinder us from ascending to a position where we shall command the markets of the world, and give laws to commerce, and possess resources sufficient to sustain more missionaries than we now have population ? This, it is true, is regarded by unpractical, dreamy, and romantic minds, as a low view—a view which, on these high occasions of spiritual enjoyment, should be kept in the background. Then, too, we are taunted by foreigners of a certain class, and the taunt has been thoughtlessly re-echoed among ourselves, with our devotion to material interests. But let us be just to ourselves ; let us remember that there is a bright as well as a dark side to this subject ; let us not forget, that man is material as

well as spiritual. Body and soul are here married together ; and no nation can ever rise to the highest influence, or be prepared to do the largest missionary work, when the interests of both are not fully cared for. Our education begins in the material, and ascends to the immaterial. But, ascend as we may, in this world we never rise wholly above the material. Influences mighty for good spring out of it. What a prodigious force of individual development along the various paths of enterprise is there in the prospect of gaining a competence, of giving to the family an education fitting it for high position in society ? What a power is it to restrain from prodigal expenditures in frivolous pleasure, to hold men back from vice, even when it cannot win them to virtue ? What is it but this that stirs the heart of this great city, and wakens every morning the hum of its busy population, and pours along its crowded thoroughfares these on-rushing tides of human energy ? What but this rouses the latent activities of our people to develop the resources of this continent ; —to build, cultivate, mine and navigate, vexing the land and the ocean with all the instruments of a world-wide production ? And this is just as it should be. This very material activity, quickened and guided by moral principle, is absolutely essential to the development of a strong and manly character. We are past the day when courage and force could only grow on the field of battle ; whose choicest instruments of manly culture were the war-horse, the sword, the battle-axe ; when society was divided horizontally into two classes, the serfs

who toiled as cattle, and the soldier who spent his life in alternate war and revelry. We are all soldiers, and our field of battle is the world. The path of true nobility opens to all. The boy who, flung forth like a waif on this restless sea, by honest industry, wins a position, where respect and influence attend him, he is our noble; the artisan, whose invention multiplies the power of the hand over material forces; the youth who, rising from small beginnings, ascends the heights of a profession, originates large enterprises for humanity, and sustains institutions full of blessing to humanity, these are our kings. And in the production of such men on a great scale, this attention to material interests, is a power of vast influence.

All this has a direct, logical connection with our work as a people, who are to propagate the gospel aggressively through the world. It has to do with it, because this process of self-development along the line of material interests is necessary to unfold the attributes which give us power to impress ourselves upon men. It has to do with it, because the product of this devotion to material interests is capital diffused through the masses; and capital is one of the means God uses to convert the world. Is it of no consequence, when we send forth our forces to fight for us, that other forces vastly greater, are here intensely busy in creating the means to supply the instruments and material of successful warfare? What has made the credit of this Board a power in every land? Why, when the greatest commercial houses have been prostrated, and

bankruptcy has unsettled confidence, and men have not known whom to trust, has the paper of a missionary society, without a cent of invested capital, been as good as gold the world over? Why, when debt has accumulated upon us through the diminished resources of our friends, have these secretaries, this committee, never doubted for a moment that the time would come, as this night we bless our God it has come, when every cent of that indebtedness would be canceled, and from a still higher vantage ground, they would address themselves to the work of saving a lost world? You answer, 'Faith in its supporters,' a conviction that this cause had wrought itself so deeply into the hearts of God's people in this land, that in due time they would come to their help. All this is true. But I am not mistaken in affirming that another idea is necessary to complete the answer—this faith had its foundation in the ultimate ability as well as the will of those who sustained it; in the fact that behind it there stood a great multitude determined to *create* that which should fill its coffers;—a multitude of Christian men and women, strong in their individual responsibility, strong in their habits of productive labor, strong in their ability to rise above these temporary depressions in consequence of that energy which they share with their countrymen, and able thus to secure those material interests out of which should flow the gold and the silver to sustain the missionary and support his schools, and give him Bibles and tracts, and compass him round with the felt power of a productive Christian sympathy.

V. It is admitted that if this devotion to material interest stood alone, it would soon exhaust itself ; producing wealth and consequent luxury, it would conduct us speedily to a corrupt and effete civilization. But this is not the case ; it is largely animated and guided by a high literary, as well as religious culture. Education diffused through the masses has become an essential characteristic of this race. On the revival of letters, none of the cognate races embraced this idea more heartily. The establishment of the universities was the first movement, because the first necessity was that of teachers, preachers, and statesmen. But as the right of private judgment consequent on the Reformation, took root among the people, the logical result must in time follow ; the people must be prepared to exercise their rights by a fitting education. When the race colonized this new world, their first step was to establish the college as the truest source of general intelligence. From this went forth men of true learning, under whose plastic influence there sprang into almost full-grown proportions, our noble system of common schools. It is not necessary for me to discuss at large a subject so well understood. It is enough to say that this idea of the practical enlightenment of the people has taken fast hold of the heart of this race ; that every where it has given birth to institutions of learning covering the whole field of science in all its departments ; that the teacher follows hard upon the footsteps of the pioneer, and while the axe still resounds through our grand old forests, the foundations of the school, the

academy and the college are laid in the virgin soil in anticipation of the future millions. I need not say how the original idea of a truly Christian education, lapsing in part through the influence of infidelity and foreign immigration, is gaining its true position, and the Word of God is coming more and more to take its appropriate place as the highest science which man can attain. Nor need I dwell upon the practical character of this education ; how while it ascends to the mastery of science in its noblest and profoundest aspects, its great aim is to develop that tact and wisdom which in the conduct of life enable its possessor to avail himself of all known resources to wield the powers of nature to promote the ends of life, and so lifts him above the necessities of time and place which limit and oppress the ignorant.

I wish rather to concentrate your attention upon the preparation which all this gives for the work of missions. The race possessed of such resources has reached a vantage ground of power. Science of this kind, especially when conjoined with vast material resources, constitutes the true sovereignty of the world. Wherever this people go, they hold in their hands the destinies of men ; they are bound by an original fitness to impress themselves upon others ; the same constitution of things which makes man the lord of the world, makes the educated man the lord of the ignorant and rude. Mind enlightened by true wisdom is designed of God to be the plastic power which is to mould mind unenlightened. This is the secret of the progress and success of the Anglo-Saxon and American ; this the

source of that influence which makes the world bring him tribute ; this it is which, wherever he plants himself, makes him the superior and the conqueror ; this gives him empire—not so much the empire of civil law as that higher empire of influence which the half-civilized and barbarous nations cannot resist. And so, wherever the missionaries of this race go, they show themselves to belong to a race fitted to send forth a moulding influence. At once they rear the standard of education as well as religion. Everywhere they are recognized as men of large abilities, of refined manners, of thorough science. They address themselves to the work of renovating nations as men trained in the bosom of a superior intelligence. They are prepared to meet the philosophies of the pagan, and the sophistries of the corrupt Christian. Men like Martyn and Duff, who, on the banks of the Ganges, can argue with the awakened and acute young Brahmin ; like Smith and Thomson, who, on the land where patriarchs and prophets once tabernacled, can pour the light of Christian science on the passionate hearts of the wild Arab ; like Goodell and Hamlin, who, on the shores of the Bosphorus, can lift the vision of a pure Christianity before the eyes of corrupt Greeks and Armenians, and initiate there a reformation as pure, as powerful as that which centuries ago snatched the choicest jewels from the proud tiara of the man of sin. Give me, says the natural philosopher, a place to stand upon, and a lever long enough, and I will move the world. Give me rather, may we say, men like these, backed and sus-

tained by the prayers, the influence and the contributions of a Christian race like this, and with the divine blessing, the world will not only be moved—it will be regenerated.

Nor are we to pass lightly by, in this connection, the language which this race employs for the expression of its intelligence. Of all living tongues, where is there another so copious, versatile, sinewy; another that, like the race it represents, is so composite and cosmopolitan, absorbing into itself the energy and the life of all dead and living tongues? Think of the wealth of science and literature it possesses; think of the affluence of Christian thought it has treasured up! I know that like a strong, deep river, it has its foul eddies, here and there its stagnant side pools, full of all abominable creatures; but its body, its main current, is clear and strong as the river of life. I have read somewhat in other languages; but where in any of them is there to be found so rich, so varied, so wonderful a missionary literature as crowds the literature of this race. Within half a century, its sons have created libraries—libraries filled with the records of their missionary labors, with lives of the good and the great at home and abroad; with travels and descriptions of manners, and opinions, and scenes of every nation and land under the whole heaven—volumes instinct with the power of God, full of the triumphs of that Cross before which of yore the Roman eagle folded its proud wings, and the barbarous Goth laid down the savage weapons of his irresistible power. A race nurtured in such a language, breathing and

creating such a literature, is one out of which men are prepared to go forth panoplied in celestial armor, informed with a divine life for the conquest of the world.

VI. Let us pass to another thought. The *character and position of the Protestantism we possess* constitutes our most vital, substantive efficiency. At the very beginning there was a marked distinction between the races from which we sprung and others. Christianity was always foreign to the peculiar life of the Roman and Grecian. Just so far as they received it, their characteristic national spirit was destroyed. The Greek sought to subject it to taste and sentiment, the special form of his culture. The Roman subjected it to law, and made this an authority superior to conscience. And hence it must either wholly destroy these national peculiarities, or be modified to harmonize with them. The disastrous result of this conformity of Christianity to their spirit is broadly revealed in history, and constitutes at this day the most formidable opponent to the progress of the pure, simple gospel. But in the Anglo-Saxon and cognate German races, it had a different reception. Their spirit was less artificial. They had no priestly caste, no splendid sacrificial rites. They deemed it inconsistent with the nature of celestial beings to be confined within walls or images. They had retained the earlier Revelation in vastly greater purity. And so when Christianity entered, it found few of those corruptions to oppose its progress. It entered the heart, it har-

monized with the original spirit, it took full possession of the mind of this people. Its enunciations, its fundamental principles, found in their simple code, both of religion and law, little to resist save that depravity which belongs to all men. And as in the Anglo-Saxon the development of the principles of the Common Law advanced, Christianity went hand and hand with it. Every step towards the establishment of individual freedom was consecrated by the higher principles of religion. When the Reformation came, asserting the right of private judgment, exalting the Bible and conscience above the authority of kings and emperors, the Anglo-Saxon, long trained in the line of civil freedom, at once grasped them and fought for them with wonderful energy. Henceforth the two were indissolubly united. No matter what was the specific object to be attained, whether political or religious, underneath the great struggle, deep in the heart of the Briton, these twin powers were the ever-present, animating forces.

The transfer of the contest to this land was only an advance in the same direction. It was Protestantism, in part accepting and adopting, in part originating as its own, the highest form of both civil and religious freedom. It was the fundamental principle of Protestantism revealing itself in all departments of the life of the Anglo-American. Into science as well as law it infused itself. Instead of basing science on facts, and religion on mere authority, instead of enshrining religion in a casket, like imitation jewels too sacred for the profane touch of the material or metaphysical investigator,

it threw it open to the world; it challenged scrutiny; it held men to a thorough test of its divine origin; it said to the bold spirit of inquiry, Search into these things, pry into all their concealments, detect if you can one worthless stone; go up into the heavens, go down into the earth, penetrate the nature of man, ransack history, and bring forth if you can one indisputable fact, that can stand as a true witness against the divine original of our religion. Now what has been the result of this long contest? It has settled for all time the right of private judgment. "I am ready," says Luther to the Pope, "to give up to all men, and in all things; but as for the word of truth, I neither can nor will let that go." This principle the Anglo-Saxon and American has exalted into a living, conquering spirit. It ramifies all through his political, social, literary life. It moulds his childhood, it influences his manhood, it gives a peculiar character to his genius, a tone to his manners, a nobility to his actions. Look abroad over the world! Where, outside of this race, is this principle thus recognized? Where is there another nation, in which it is not crippled or crushed by some outward force, secular or ecclesiastical? The Protestants of Europe have a mighty conflict yet before them. They cannot propagate the truth abroad over the world, until they have mastered the evil influences that settle down upon their own lands. But we have fought and won this battle. We are the advance guard of Protestantism. Our missionaries go forth educated in law, in science; in religion, recognizing God alone in them all; free from the

disabilities which encumber others. Behind them is a nation in sympathy with their efforts ; a nation full of life, of motion, of influence ; a nation which, from its lofty vantage ground, is bound to give its light, its sacred principles to the millions in darkness.

Nay, more than this is true. Some of those peculiarities of religious life, which have been our chief reproach, contribute not a little to our power as a missionary race. The diversities of belief, the breaking up of the outward form of the church into various denominations, against which Erastianism and the Papacy protest so vehemently, are securities for the perpetuity of the truth, and sources of vast efforts towards the conversion of men. Growing out of the purest and simplest principles of our Protestantism, they are so many independent conservators of the truth and safeguards against the overmastering power of any one great error. The Episcopalian holds in highest esteem the idea of the church and its rites as the chief power in life, supreme over all other forces. It is a noble principle. Let him hold it and guard it, even though I cannot accept all the inferences and minor opinions which he associates with it. The Independent magnifies the opposite principle, the individual as the source of authority. Let him hold and guard it well ; for it is one of the fundamental elements of our Christianity. The Presbyterian exalts constitutional, representative freedom, and a clear, well-defined, strong symbol of faith. Let him stand fast by that standard which Calvin planted on the shores of Lake Leman, for when it falls a tower of strength crumbles to the ground. The Methodist

insists upon the predominance of an emotional nature in all the actings of a living religion. Let him work on that line; for when religion becomes a mere affair of church rites and creeds and government, then its vitality has fled. The Baptist, sweeping away the ancient dispensation, guards with special care the ordinances of the new. Let them all work together; work on their own line of power. The unity of the church is in its spirit, not in its form. Its power is in the pure life of its members; not in any absolute oneness of view of all minor aspects of Christianity. These diversities are all on the surface; they reach not the fundamental points of faith. The evils they generate are temporary; the good they effect is vast and abiding. In their practical working they largely counteract the tendency to a one-sided religion. They appeal to the different principles that move society; they rouse, they animate men to work for Christ. They give to our Protestantism, what has been the boast of the Papacy, a place where men of every variety of temperament and education can labor in harmony with themselves; they enlist all kinds of good and natural influences; they suit the broad aspect of society; they push themselves into new fields. What is lost from the concentration of a vast organism, is more than gained by the augmented power of individuals. At first the struggle was to live. Then as these branches of the church multiplied, they entered upon aggressive movements for the conquest of the world. Each one became, what God meant it should be, a missionary society, raising up, commissioning its members to preach the

gospel in all the world. The intensity of denominational action, the harmony which characterizes bodies uniting according to the genius of their own system, the innate power of an awakened Christianity, stimulated by the examples of others, all combined to promote their efficiency in spreading the gospel. Out on the broad field, in contact with the superstitions and depravity of the world, the rigidity of their ecclesiastical systems relaxed, while the grand fundamentals of faith rose into clear view. Who cannot see in this marshaling of sects, this onward march of these different branches of the church of Jesus, a new source of hope for the world? Who believes that any one of them called to the throne, intrusted with their combined power, would guard the great truths of religion as well, or advocate them with as deep and effective an energy as the whole moving on the line of their separate denominational preference?

Look over history, and you will find that two of the most effective obstacles to the onward progress of the church, have been the centralization of power in a few hands, and the wild, irregular action of individuals. The first, in its efforts to maintain itself, becomes intolerant; it seeks to enforce a rigid uniformity on all points, whether vital or trivial, and in the effort, it crushes out the vitality of free, spontaneous action; it puts the intellect in chains; it subjects the soul to its own artificial and self-created forms, and reduces it to a machine. The second, struggling for freedom, spends its strength in efforts to resist; it exalts the minor into fundamental beliefs; it lives in opposition rather than in

true progress, and wastes the energies that, consecrated to the work of saving souls, would have brightened the firmament with constellations of glory, in winning transient victories, or suffering useless defeats. But when the church is marshaled in divisions, both these tendencies meet with forces that modify and control their excess. If a few ecclesiastics rise up and say, "We are the only church; put your necks under our iron yoke;" if these men, in virtue of this enormous assumption, claim supremacy over the conscience of the people, the free thought, and free speech, and free action generated by these diverse organizations, rise up and demand the proof. And if the evidence is not sufficient, the ridiculous assumption, destitute of reason and power, serves only to confirm the people in opposition. Meanwhile the mutual action and reaction of these great denominations on each other, compel an appeal, not to an assumed power, but to the practical reason and conscience of the church, enlightened by the Word. And thus the lay clement, the body of the church, rises to influence and practical control. On the other hand, as these denominations have taken their form largely from the constitutional and natural differences that exist in humanity itself, they furnish a refuge and field of action for men of all varieties of temperament and prejudice. He who is not at home in one, if he have the true spirit of Christ in him, cannot well fail to find in some others the atmosphere of thought and feeling he loves. The process of development goes on in harmony with the varied characteristics of man. All trees do not grow as well in the same

soil and climate. In one position they shoot up tall and strong ; in another they pine and die. A cedar will live on the top of a rock, where an oak would fail to find nourishment. Some men need rigid forms to help them on in the Christian life ; some are chafed and soured, unless they can give full play to their emotional nature. And thus God hath so permitted his church to be organized in this land, that there **may** be the fullest unfolding of the powers of the Anglo-American, with various and strongly marked diversities of character. And this, too, in this stage of the history of the church, with reference to the grand work which this race is to effect in the conversion of the world.

VII. But not to detain you much longer, let me say a word on two other features of that training, by which God has signally set us apart for the work of missions. Whoever shall write the history of the American church, will be obliged to notice the *remarkable character given to it by revivals of religion.* These have not been, as in many other churches, an occasional incident ; they have entered into its life ; they have given character to its development ; they have marked its progress. Since the days of the Apostles, the Christian church, in any one of its branches, has never witnessed displays of God's converting power so wonderful, numerous and extensive, as this church has enjoyed during the last sixty years. More than one hundred years ago, when a barren orthodoxy was preparing the nation for the reign of infidelity, the quickening spirit of a wide-spread awakening infused new life into the

church. When the French war and the terrible scenes of the Revolution, had prepared the soil for the skepticism of the Encyclopædists, and when as a consequence, four-fifths of the intelligent youth of the nation had ceased to have faith in the Word of God, then began a new era of revivals; then the despairing church shook off her fetters, and went forth fair as the moon, clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners. When, thirty-five years ago, began that turbid stream of immigration which threatened to submerge the institutions of religion and drown our verdant Zion in a sea of corruption as deadly as that which rolls over the cities of the plain, then was the arm of the Lord revealed for our deliverance. And so, at every period of greatest danger, the sudden, mighty demonstrations of the Divine Spirit have given to the church new life, and lifted her up to a loftier vantage ground of power.

Now it is not necessary I should trace out the connection of this remarkable training with that spirit of missions, which, almost cotemporaneous with its second era, began to animate the church. The first effect, indeed, of a genuine revival, is not seen in the production of the foreign missionary spirit. There is a great internal work of self-development—a work of nurture and education in respect to young converts, which absorbs the minds and occupies the hands of the pastors and older members of the church. But when these young converts have become stable, and strong, then the same elements of life and power, amid which they were born into the kingdom, show themselves in

the energy with which they seek to make the Cross victorious all over the world. Then, the maturing Christian learns to consecrate his possessions more and more to this distant work. Youth, burning with a desire to preach Christ, enter college, and youth already there catch this heavenly spirit, and meet in secret places, beside haystacks, in earnest prayer for divine guidance. Thus the means and the men for God's great work of evangelization are at hand. Thus did Mills, and Judson, and Fisk, and Newell, receive the divine inspiration. Thus the church has found the spirit and the power to enter into this grandest of all enterprises. Nay, more than this. These men, born amidst revivals, partaking of the life and energy which they create, go forth expecting to impress the world: they expect to see similar revivals wherever, on a heathen or a nominally Christian shore, they uprear the standard of the Cross. The church, and the men she sends forth, share in these strong, positive, impressive characteristics which a revival always creates. They expect literally to see nations born in a day; the faith which struggled into life amidst the conversion of half a parish, the consecration which stood up for Christ, surrounded by scores and hundreds of rejoicing young converts, can see no reason why the same power of God, using the same truth, can not and will not convert hundreds of heathen in a day. And so, when they preach Christ in the islands of the sea, or on the plains and valleys of Asia Minor, they expect to see, and God has given it to them to see, his arm made bare for the conversion of thousands of souls.

And thus, by all this discipline of revivals, and this peculiar process of development, and this creation of such positive characteristics, has God clearly shown that we are not to dwell at home ; that great as is this field of labor, mighty the obstacles here to be overcome, yet he has given us an overplus of Christian energy, that must seek its object in the conversion of the world. Every revival of religion, every great era of revivals, is the coming of the Lord to victory ; the prelude of that grand chorus, when all nations shall join in the Christian's ' Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.'

VIII. One thought still remains, to give completeness to our discussion. For full half a century, God has been organizing the American church for the work of foreign missions, and training it, in actual service, for this great object. Early in our history, the apostolic Eliot, and a century after, the no less devoted Brainerd, illustrated and kept alive the smouldering fire. But the time had not come for the inauguration of this spirit as the all-animating life of the church. The home work overtasked all her energies. She built her houses, and cleared the forests, and reared her sanctuaries with the rifle at her side. Then came the *great contest*. She had to win peace and freedom along the path of trial, and in garments rolled in blood. When freedom came, civil institutions were to be settled ; the foundations for the highest civilization of unborn millions must be laid ; the temple of liberty, well ordered and symmetrical,

must be reared upon them. Lexington, and Bunker Hill, and Saratoga, and Trenton, and Yorktown, and Philadelphia, were steps essential to the progress of the church, as well as the nation, to that high position, from which her peaceful energies could be exerted for influence over the world. At length we are a nation; for thirty years the bold experiment of self-government has been tried; in the career of public and private prosperity, we have advanced with vast strides. For more than half a score of years, the spirit of a pure revival has been deepening the piety and working out the foul formal leaven of the church. And now *the hour* has come; the trains of influence from various sources converge to a point; this Society, to be henceforth the living representative of the idea of the world's conversion, to be henceforth a grand agent in giving power and efficiency to that idea in the heart of the church, is born. It is born amid prayers and struggles of faith in the heart of the young, the enthusiastic, the strong. It was too bold and startling an idea to be originated in the cool caution of age. It came forth into life like all the great ideas which have revolutionized society, and moved the world rapidly forward in its career of improvement; just as the apostolic church received its mightiest impulse toward the conquest of the nations from the youthful Paul; just as the Reformation of the seventeenth century sprang to life in the student heart and brain of Luther; just as the great awakening of the last century, and the creation of one of the largest organizations of the church, issued forth

from the halls of Oxford, where the young Wesleys and Whitfield felt the inspiration of a new life.

The conversion of the world was in itself no new idea. It was as old as the grand predictions of the prophets ; it flamed forth on the apostolic banner ; it had stirred the heart of the church, in every age since Jesus ascended, to achieve her noblest victories ; it floated up to heaven on the wings of sacred song ; it gave strength to martyrs and confessors when the sword of persecution was unsheathed ; it was echoed in basilicas and cathedrals ; it was whispered in cells and closets whenever from the lips of God's people went forth the prayer, " Thy kingdom come." But in its relation to us as a nation set to bear a great part in making it a reality, it was new, bold, almost presumptuous. As yet the church was in the gristle of youth, its limited resources seemingly tasked to the uttermost in planting the institutions of religion where the advancing population opened her frontiers to the sun ; as yet the nation had hardly won a name, much less influence among the sovereignties of the world ; as yet these sovereignties held fast the doors of entrance to their benighted populations, as sternly as the eternal ice closed up the north-west passage :—at such an hour, in such circumstances, the church heard the clarion voice summoning her to gird herself for the conversion of the world. It rang round the mountains that encircle Williams-town—Hoosick and Holyoke answered back to each other—the heights of Andover prolonged the strain—Boston and Salem and Litchfield listened

till the inspiration of this great thought filled their minds: then other clarions rang; from valley to valley, and mountain top to mountain top, along the quiet intervalle of the Connecticut, where the spires of New Haven sentinel her grand old University, and the surges of the Atlantic lift their everlasting anthem on the shores of Massachusetts, the battle-cry swelled loud, and clear, as of yore it rose when the cannon on yon hill-top proclaimed the coming conflict to an expectant nation. Yea! beyond the limits of New England, along the highlands and palisades of the Hudson, above the roar of the young Metropolis, lingering around the classic shades of Princeton, startling the quiet of the city of Brotherly Love, it went forth on its glad mission.

I do not affirm that this great thought came forth from any single mind; in the preparation of the church for this, it had been growing into life in hundreds of souls that longed for the coming of Messiah in his glory. But I do affirm that it was given to a few young minds, deeply penetrated with the fervor and the enthusiasm of the great Apostle, to make it living reality—to lead on in the great work, and to consecrate themselves to it, and so compel, the church to sustain them. I am not about to rear their memorial. It is here; it is all over this land; it is on every shore impressed by the footprints of American missionaries. More durable than brass; loftier than yon monument of stone that marks the first great battle of the Revolution; covered all over with letters of living light, growing brighter and brighter

with age, it needs no historian's pen, no chisel of Old Mortality to illustrate its glory, or deepen and freshen its inscriptions, before the eyes of the church can take in its supernal grandeur. Manifest it is that the work they did, issuing in the organization of this Board, was one of the most efficient forces designed and chosen by God to educate this nation to be the standard-bearer of the gospel all over the world. When Mills, consecrated in infancy by a mother's vow to the conversion of the heathen, and Hall and Judson, and Newell and Fisk and Nott, stood up and said to the people of God, send us into the deepest darkness of earth to bear from you to the benighted millions the salvation of Jesus, it was as if the spirit of the apostles and the early martyrs and confessors in the sublime heroism of their faith had become incarnate; nay, it was as if the Spirit of our ascended Lord plead with us through those youthful lips and moved before us in those youthful forms. Dead, thrice dead, plucked up by the roots and withered, must have been the church that could have witnessed unmoved this living resurrection of the faith and love and hope and martyr spirit of the apostolic age. This nation has had its heroic age; its nobles, who laid property, honor and life on the altar of liberty; its martyrs, fallen ere the shout of victory echoed over a continent disenthralled. Every where around me I see their footprints. It was their example, their shed blood, that, thrilling through a nation's heart, roused and animated and encouraged millions to press on till the great object was won. This

church has its heroic age ; its martyrs ; its nobles who gave to God their young life. It was their Christian heroism in an infinitely holier cause, that roused and animated the desponding hosts of Israel to enter into the work of giving the liberty of Jesus to a world enslaved by sin. That old Salem Tabernacle, in the year of our Lord 1812, on the 6th of February, witnessed a scene of solemn grandeur unsurpassed in the history of the American church—a scene that while this church lives can never be repeated—a scene that has lived in perennial freshness, growing grander in the light of its infinite issues, before the eyes of two generations. For there, amidst the tears of trembling hearts, did the divine Spirit give to the church the first unmistakable token of its true mission ; that scene was the dawning of the coming day—a day whose sun, ascending to its meridian, shall soon illumine all nations with its glory.

Then, as they went forth, lo ! a new power to educate the church and urge it onward in its work sprang into being. Eager eyes watched their footsteps ; ears sensitive to the slightest whisper waited for tidings of victory or defeat. Some stood up, and worked on, amidst the deep darkness ; some, broken and bowed, returned ; some went to sleep, ere their work was fairly begun. But whether standing, or broken, or asleep, they gave to their native land and the church of their fathers the first pages of a new, a wonderful Christian literature. The descriptions of the countries they visited, the lifelike narratives of heathenism or a corrupt Christianity, the story of their trials and their success,

came back to us from these our sons and daughters. Published in books, sent forth through the pages of the Panoplist and Missionary Herald, circulated in newspapers, read in families and church meetings, they found thousands of eager auditors, they spoke to a vast multitude of the hosts of Israel.

It seemed a dark providence that so early cut down him, confessedly the foremost of this noble band of apostolic youth, ere he could enter fully upon his mission. But from the ocean grave of Samuel J. Mills a voice went forth that thrilled through thousands, and his Memorial roused scores of young men to buckle on his armor and tread in his footsteps. Sadness rested upon the church when the sun of Harriet Newell went down long before it had reached its meridian; but who can estimate the power of her short and simple biography in educating the church, and inspiring a desire for the missionary work in the hearts of her own sex? And thus, as this new-born literature entered into the influences that are moulding the church of Jesus; as it grew in variety and interest; as it came home closer to the hearts of Christians, it became part of their daily food, a living, stimulating force in the bosom of our Zion, under which youth grew up informed on these great topics, and we all became insensibly linked to the cause of the world's conversion.

Nor are we to pass lightly by those missionary lyrics which genius, consecrated to Jesus and inspired by these same influences, has created. Who of us that, in our childhood, learnt to sing that noble lyric beginning,—

Wake ! Isles of the South, your redemption is near,  
No longer repose on the borders of gloom ;  
The strength of his Chosen in love will appear,  
And light shall arise on the verge of the tomb ;—

a lyric sung by hundreds, as the second band of missionaries (for the Sandwich Islands) embarked from Long wharf, now nearly forty years ago—who of us can ever forget the interest that it awakened, or who can tell how many hearts it bound to this work with cords never to be broken ? What hymn book is now complete without a large collection of these sacred songs ? How many youth are there in the American church that do not know by heart Heber's Missionary Hymn ? In what congregation can you not sing it without a book—sing it with the spirit and the understanding, as in swelling volume, the old and the young delight to give it utterance ? Who can soberly sit down and measure the force of this newly created literature in giving a peculiar character to the thoughts, the experiences, the prayers, of the American church ?

Rapidly I pass over other elements of this missionary culture, which it is not fit wholly to pass by. The appeals of our missionaries, as they have returned from year to year, bronzed or broken by the heat and toil of conflict, have gone down into the heart of the people of God. As they have spoken to great congregations, as they have told their simple story in our Sabbath schools, pastors and people have been roused to new activity in this cause. What an influence in the training of the church ; what seed scattered on a mellow soil, yet to fully ripen in a glorious harvest, has gone forth

from Abeel and Scudder, Poor and Smith, and Goodell and Thomson, and their associates,—as they returned to us, after their years of patient labor!

What a power, too, has this Board been in the character of its members, its officers, and its annual gatherings, to inspire confidence, quicken zeal, and spread the flame of missions through the land. To say nothing of Griffin, and Dwight, and Beecher, and Woods, and Spring, and Worcester, what a power of light in their lives, what a legacy of vital influence in their death, were Evarts, and Cornelius, and Wisner, and Armstrong? When men like these lead on the hosts of Israel, the cause they advocate, grander and mightier though it be than all mere instruments, stands forth commended by all that is most pure and noble in our humanity.

What a wonderful reflex influence has *success* exerted in exalting the standard of feeling! The missionaries went forth to the Sandwich Islands, taking their lives in their hands, expecting to wrestle with idolatry in its stronghold, and it may be fall in death before the men who had imbrued their hands in the blood of that great discoverer, Captain Cook;—when lo! as they approach the shore, the idols are fallen, and the simple people welcome their coming. The news of that providential interposition, thrilling through the churches, gave a new interest to the work. And so, as barrier after barrier has been broken down, as governmental opposition has given way, as revival after revival has baptized the missions, as new and un-

expected fields, white for the reaper's sickle, have been opened, the church has seemed to see our king Messiah marching before her, and leading her chosen sons to victory; as of old he baffled the powers of earth, when he planted Israel in Canaan, and reared the Cross above the proud banner of the Roman. Nay, most wonderful has it been, that the times of deepest darkness through which this Board has passed at home, have been signalized by its most rapid and steady advance abroad; and thus God has spoken to our timid and desponding hearts, nerving them to new efforts and sacrifices for the cause he loved.

At the first, this Board stood alone, and led the way in the work for preaching Christ to the heathen. But soon, under its influence, other organizations sprang into being. When one of our young standard-bearers changed his views on the subject of baptism, it seemed an event as disastrous as it was unexpected; but God meant to take a coal from the sacrifice that burned on our altar, to kindle the fire of sacrifice in the heart of a great and an advancing division of his sons and daughters. And as under this culture, the spirit spread, division after division of the church wheeled into line; those who had united with us at first, as they gained strength, began to move independently as new orbs of light, and new powers to educate the nation still more perfectly for its work. These organizations, numbering somewhat less than a score, represent a vast amount of talent, and wealth, and piety. This Board, far from cherishing a narrow-minded jealousy, has ever

rejoiced in their prosperity, and wished them God-speed in their noble work. Like this city, sitting on her hills, surrounded by these growing and beautiful towns and villages, and bound to them by a thousand cords of interest and social life, this Board sits to-day a Queen girt about by these her handmaids, in full sympathy with all their plans for the world's conversion, counting them Christ's teachers and her colleagues in training the whole church for its grandest work.

But I must arrest this discussion ere it reaches completeness. I may not dwell upon the minor influences which are at work all through the churches in creating this missionary spirit;—how the great societies for printing Bibles and tracts, and educating youth, and preaching the gospel to our seamen, enforce their appeal by this grandest argument, the conversion of the world;—how the monthly concert, Sabbath school missionary organizations, and the necessities laid upon pastors to speak on this great theme, are all working together in one direction—the wheels within the great wheel of God's providence, which is moving the church forward to the point where she shall begin to realize the mission which God has given her as a power aggressive upon the thrones of darkness. I know that a vast work has yet to be done before she enters fully into the idea of this discourse. But when I go back to the day when this Board was organized, when I enter that old Tabernacle church at Salem, where, after the toil and baffled hopes of a two years' probation, our first mission-

aries were set apart ;—and then to-night look over this assembly, look out over this land, look beyond to those great works which have been accomplished in the world, I see, as clearly as when the sun shines at midday, a thousand unmistakable signals of God's purpose in planting this nation on this continent ;—his purpose to bless us in making us the dispensers of his Word to the dead millions of our race.

Not in vain has he carried us through a discipline so peculiar, given us an enterprise so restless and aspiring, a dominion so substantial and far-reaching, elements of material and intellectual richness so vast, and lifted from us the civil burdens that oppress other nations ; not in vain has the church come out of the wilderness, leaning on the arm of her Beloved, and flinging from her the crutches of state establishments, gone forth to peaceful conquest in the sole might of the Lord of hosts ; not in vain has this people net-worked the world with those lines of commerce, along which her influence may flash in a day over ten thousand points ; not in vain do the nations open their brazen gates to her citizens, and recognize alike the resistless force of her arms and the superiority of her mental culture ; oh ! not in vain, through storm and sunshine, through martyr-fires and confessors' tears, has the church clung to the divine Word as her primal and all-sufficient light. For this God has baptized her with revivals ; for this he has inaugurated this spirit of missions, and opened the world to her influence ; for this he has sent her eagle flying victorious from sea to sea ; for this he gathers

on this continent millions from other lands, to be absorbed, Americanized, converted by us, and made an element of vast power in the future ; for this did the martyred Lyman, and Munson, and Pohlman die ; for this did he plant this city of the Puritans, and make it a light-house, whose rays streaming far beyond Massachusetts Bay, should penetrate the darkness of the eastern world ; for this our fathers fought their bloody battles ; for this our statesmen have fashioned our civil constitutions ; for this our merchants have built up so vast a commerce ; for this our artisans and inventors have starred the land with our ten thousand workshops ; for this our colleges and schools were built ; for this, ere the light of the next half-century Jubilee shall dawn upon us, this nation will count her hundred millions, and ten thousand of her sons and daughters laboring for Christ in foreign lands.

I take my stand at that not distant day—a day which some in this house, in a green old age, shall live to see ; I behold the preparations of centuries revealing their ultimate purpose and rushing on to the grand conclusion ;—nations into whose languages your missionaries have translated this living truth, cast away their idols and receive it to their hearts ; the Koran is a relict of the past, while mosque and minaret are consecrated to the Great Prophet ; the Shasters are powerless, while the ancient temples of Buddha and Vishnu, purged from their foul and bloody incarnations, resound with the praise of the incarnate Son of God ; the Tartar throne, in the kingdom of the children of the sun, is known only to history, while their crowded cities welcome the

children of Him whose light shall lighten the world; Ethiopia ascends from the mephitic darkness of ages, and with her passionate heart steadied, and her feeble intellect enlarged by Christian culture, sends heavenward the song of a rapturous thanksgiving; the nations that have drunk the blood of Christ's martyrs, passing through their baptism of blood, wounded and bruised hasten to the feet of Him whose sceptre is full of mercy, and whose touch alone can heal; the man of sin broken, despairing of conquest, prays only for existence; clinging to the skirts of this vast army of Gentiles, the sons of Abraham,—the dreadful imprecation of their fathers, "His blood be upon us," expiated,—read with purged vision the glowing predictions of their prophets of Jesus the Son of God; while over ten thousand towns and cities floats the peaceful banner of the Anglo-Saxon and American church.

Is this a vision too bright, too wonderful, too glorious for your faith to discern through the short interval of fifty years? Spirits of the departed! ye who saw this Board organized with much travail, and many tears, while the darkness rested so thickly upon the world, that you could scarcely discern the Star of Bethlehem slowly rising amidst its gloom; I summon you from your thrones and your crowns; I call upon you to look on us, to answer us this night; tell me, ye saints in glory, is this scene the angels love to behold within this temple, is this great work of missions already begun, these preparations for conquest so vast and ripe, these thousands of converts in foreign lands, this Bible translated into one hundred and forty languages,

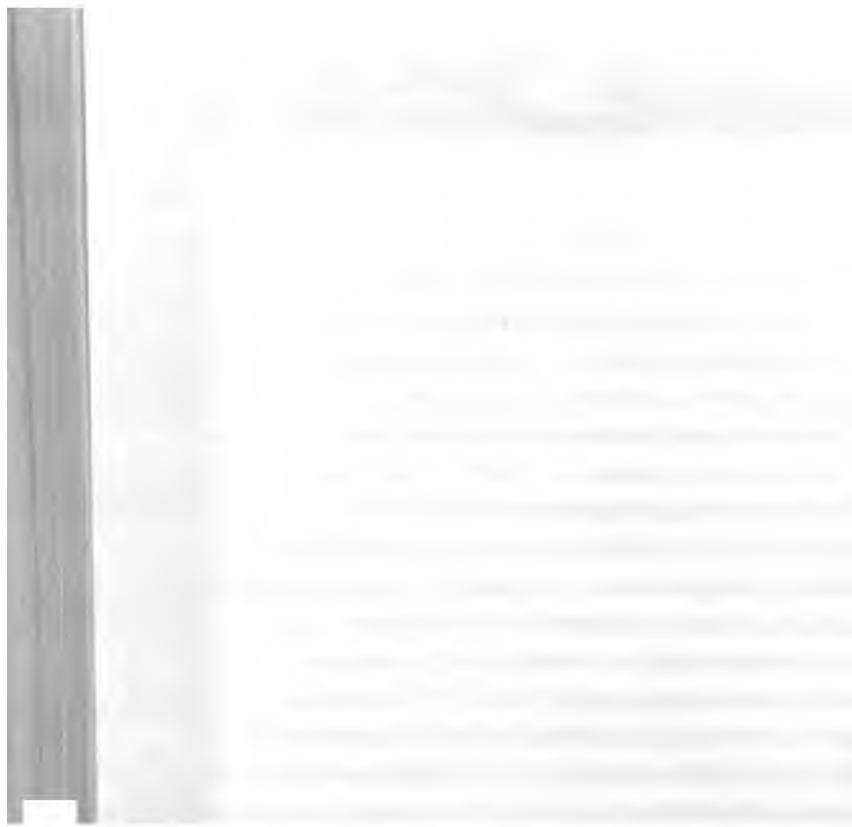
these schools and seminaries to train young converts for the ministry where, when ye lived, the idols reigned supreme, this education and marshaling of our American and British Zion for the evangelization of the world ;—answer me, is this to you less wonderful, less glorious than is the scene I have just unfolded to our vision ? I see them come ! Mills, with his youthful brow all radiant ; Judson, with his gray locks crowned with glory ; and Hall and Newell and Fisk, ye come—but oh ! ye stay not to answer ; back to the throne upon the sea of glass ye fly ; your hearts, too full for utterance in mortal ears, break forth in praise to Him who sits upon that throne. “ Now is come the kingdom of our Lord ; the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads ; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Their sun shall no more go down, nor their moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be their everlasting light, and the days of their mourning shall be ended.”

Friends of the Lord Jesus, friends of the dying heathen, missionaries of Christ returned for a season from your glad toils, fathers and mothers whose sons and daughters are far away preaching the gospel to the benighted or whose dust lies mingled with the dust of nations not yet saved, ministers of Jesus gathered from all parts of this land, young men and maidens with hearts beating with new-born love for the Savior, aged saints whose

eyes have seen the sun which shone on this land before it had sent one missionary to the foreign field, I bid you welcome ; with you I hail the morning, and rejoice that God permits us to see this day, —to live amidst these vast preparations for the coming of his Son to glory. Let us with one heart circle his throne with anthems of praise. ‘ Now unto the King immortal, invisible, the only wise God, and to Jesus Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, be honor, and power, and glory, for ever and ever.’ AMEN.







NOT TO BE REMOVED  
FROM THE LIBRARY

3 2044 054 763 248

